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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal, unchanging God, You are our rock, our fortress, and our stronghold. Empower our lawmakers to change in ways that will render them more faithful to You and more responsive to Your call. May they develop such moral and ethical fitness that they will clearly comprehend Your desires and be eager to do Your will. As they grow in grace and in the knowledge of You, deliver them from the bondage of fear as You turn their spirits toward the light of Your presence. May Your prevailing providence in our Nation and world make them more deeply committed to You.

We pray in Your majestic Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 29, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, I come to the floor to speak on a subject of great importance—the rise of anti-Semitism in America.

I feel compelled to speak because I am the highest ranking Jewish elected official in America—in fact, the highest ranking Jewish elected official ever in American history—and I have noticed a significant disparity between how Jewish people regard the rise of

anti-Semitism and how many of my non-Jewish friends regard it. To us, the Jewish people, the rise of anti-Semitism is a crisis—a five-alarm fire that must be extinguished. For so many other people of good will, it is merely a problem, a matter of concern. So, today, I want to use my platform to explain why so many Jewish people see this problem as a crisis.

Before I get into that, I want to offer two important caveats about what this speech is not.

This speech is not an attempt to label most criticism of Israel and the Israeli Government, generally, as anti-Semitic. I don't believe that criticism is. And this speech is also not an attempt to pit hate toward one group against that of another. I believe that bigotry against one group of Americans is bigotry against all, and that is why I have championed legislation, like the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which targets violence against Asian Americans, and the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides funding to help all houses of worship—churches, mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras—and to protect them from extremists.

When President Trump called for a Muslim ban during the first weeks of his Presidency, I held an emergency press conference to protest the ban alongside a Muslim mom and four of her daughters—all dressed in chadors—who said they feared they might never see their father again. It was a deeply distressing moment, and I am an emotional sort. I began to cry. President Trump saw me crying on TV and gave me a nickname—“Cryin’ CHUCK SCHUMER.” I was and am proud of that moniker.

The growing and vibrant Arab-American community is a vital part of our Nation and of my city, and I condemn unequivocally any vitriol and hatred against them. We tragically saw where such hatred can lead sometimes—in Vermont this week—and that is unacceptable.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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But, today, I want to focus my remarks on anti-Semitism because it hits so close to home for me and because I believe this moment demands it.

I have just said what this speech is not. So what is this speech about?

I want to describe the fears and anxieties of many Jewish Americans right now, particularly after October 7, who feel there are aspects of the debate around Israel and Gaza that are crossing over into anti-Semitism—rank anti-Semitism, with Jewish people simply being targeted for being Jewish—having nothing to do with Israel. I want to explain through the lens of history why this is so dangerous. The normalization and exacerbation of this rise in hate is the danger many Jewish people fear most. And, finally, I want to suggest how and why I hope that all Americans of good will can come together and do a better job of condemning such views and such behavior. But, first, let us establish the facts.

There is no question that anti-Semitism is a serious problem in America. In general, Jewish Americans represent 2 percent of the U.S. population. Yet we are the targets of 55 percent of all religion-based hate crimes reported by the FBI. This problem has been steadily worsening in recent years, but after Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, hate crimes against Jewish Americans have skyrocketed. The Anti-Defamation League estimates that anti-Semitic incidents have increased nearly 300 percent since October 7. The NYPD has recorded a 214-percent increase in New York City.

After October 7, Jewish Americans are feeling singled out, targeted, and isolated. In many ways, we feel alone. The solidarity that Jewish Americans initially received from many of our fellow citizens was quickly drowned out by other voices.

While the dead bodies of Jewish Israelis were still warm, while hundreds of Jewish Israelis were being carried as hostages back to Hamas tunnels under Gaza, Jewish Americans were alarmed to see some of our fellow citizens characterize a brutal terrorist attack as justified because of the actions of the Israeli Government. A vicious, blood-curdling, premeditated massacre of innocent women, men, children, the elderly—justified. Even worse, in some cases, people even celebrated what happened, describing it as the deserved fate of colonizers and calling for glory to the martyrs who carried out these heinous attacks. That happened here in America.

Many of the people who express these sentiments in America aren't neo-Nazis or card-carrying Klan members or Islamist extremists. They are, in many cases, people who most liberal Jewish Americans felt previously were their ideological fellow travelers. Not long ago, many of us marched together for Black and Brown lives; we stood against anti-Asian hatred; we protested bigotry against the LGBTQ community; we fought for reproductive jus-

tice—out of the recognition that injustice against one oppressed group is injustice against all.

But, apparently, in the eyes of some, this principle does not extend to the Jewish people: the largely Ashkenazi survivors of decades of pogroms in Imperial Russia and, in the Holocaust under Nazi Germany, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; the Mizrahi, who were forcibly evicted from Arab countries, and their descendants; the many Sephardim, who were scattered across the Mediterranean after they were expelled from Spain and Portugal in the late 1400s.

Do they not deserve the solidarity of those who advocate for the rights and dignity of the oppressed, given the long history and persecution of the Jewish people throughout the world?

Many of those protesting Israeli policy note that at least 700,000 Palestinians were displaced or forced from their homes in 1948, but they never mention the 600,000 Mizrahi Jews across the Arab world who were also displaced, whose property was confiscated, whose lives were threatened, who were expelled from their communities.

The hope, at the time, was that there would be two states—a Jewish state and a Palestinian state—living side by side. The plan was for the State of Israel to absorb the Jewish people from Arab lands and the new Palestinian State to absorb the Palestinians who now lived in Israel. In fact, Israel did absorb the displaced Jewish people of Arab lands, but the Arab nations, instead, sanctioned the United Nations to set up refugee camps for the Palestinians, refusing to accept the possibility that any of them would ever be relocated.

Several times throughout history, Israeli Prime Ministers called for a return to close to the pre-1967 borders established by the United Nations plan. Those calls were rejected by Yasser Arafat, the PLO, and the wider Arab community. Many, if not most, Jewish Americans, including myself, supported a two-state solution. We disagreed with Prime Minister Netanyahu and his administration's encouragement of militant settlers in the West Bank, which has become a considerable obstacle to a two-state solution.

But the reason why I invoke history about the founding of the Israeli State is because forgetting or even deliberately ignoring this vital context is dangerous. Some of the most extreme rhetoric against Israel has emboldened anti-Semites who are attacking Jewish people simply because they are Jewish—independent of anything having to do with Israel.

Those who are inclined to examine the world through the lens of oppressors versus the oppressed should take note that the many thousands of years of Jewish history are defined by oppression. From October 7, 2023, in southern Israel; to 2018 at the Tree of

Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh; to 1999 at the Los Angeles JCC; to 1986 at the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul; to 1974 at the Netiv Meir Elementary School in Ma'alot; to Yom Kippur, 1973, in the Golan Heights; to 1972 at the Munich Olympics and Lod Airport; to 1967 at the Straits of Tiran; to the 1940s and 1930s in Germany and Central Europe; to the 1800s in the Pale of Settlement; to 1679 in Yemen; to 1492 in Spain, 1394 in France, 1290 in England; to the Crusades of the Middle Ages; to 629 in Galilee; to the year 73 in Jerusalem; to 586 B.C. in Judea; to 722 B.C.E. in Samaria; to the 13th century B.C.E. in Egypt, the Jewish people have been humiliated, ostracized, expelled, enslaved, and massacred for millennia.

To paraphrase lines recited every year, century after century, at Passover Seder: This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. . . . In every generation, they rise up to destroy us.

For Jewish people all across the world, the history of our trauma, going back many generations, is central to any discussion about our future. Too many Americans, especially in our younger generation, don't have a full understanding of this history. Because some Jewish people have done well in America, because Israel has increased its power and territory, there are people who feel that Jewish Americans are not vulnerable; that we have the strength and security to overcome prejudice and bigotry; that we have, to quote the language of some, become the "oppressors." In fact, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories throughout the generations often theorize, often weaponize this very dynamic by pitting what successes the Jewish people have achieved against them and against their fellow countrymen. That has been throughout history. It is happening now.

But for many Jewish Americans, any strength and security that we enjoy always feels tenuous. No matter how well we are doing, it can all be taken away in an instant. That is just how it is. We only have to look back a century, a few generations, to see how this can happen.

Growing up, I remember my grandfather telling me that he rooted for Germany over Russia in World War I because Germans treated the Jewish people so much better than Russia did.

In the early 1900s, German Jews were one of the most secure and prosperous ethnic communities in Europe, but in the span of a decade, all of that changed.

When the Nazis first marched in the streets and held rallies decrying the so-called international financiers, war profiteers, and communists, many Germans of good will either stayed silent or marched alongside of them, not necessarily realizing what they were aiding and abetting. But when Adolf Hitler took the podium just a few years later at the Reichstag, it was clear by

then that the terms “international financiers,” “war profiteers,” and “communists” represented the Jewish people, whom Hitler called “parasites” feeding on the body and productive work of other nations.

By bits and pieces, the Nazis softened the ground rhetorically for what Hitler eventually stated was his true goal: “the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.” So many of those Germans of good will who marched in the early years of Hitler’s ascension stayed on the sidelines after his horrifying intent was made clear. The end result, as we all know, was the most targeted and systematic genocide in all of human history. Six million Jewish people were exterminated in a few years while so many others turned a blind eye.

History shows that anti-Semitism is deeply embedded in Europe. I have always said it is the poison of European societies—anti-Semitism is the poison of European societies, just as racism against Black Americans is the poison of our society.

While we are thankfully a far ways away from Nazi Germany today, this is why many people worry about the marches today, especially in Europe. What may begin as legitimate criticism of Israeli policy or even a valid debate over other religious, economic, and political issues can sometimes cross into something darker: attacking Jewish people for simply being Jewish.

Obviously, many of those marching here in the United States do not have any evil intent, but when Jewish people hear chants like “from the river to the sea”—a founding slogan of Hamas, a terrorist group that is not shy about their goal to eradicate the Jewish people in Israel and around the globe—we are alarmed.

When we see signs in the crowd that read “by any means necessary” after the most violent attack ever against Israeli civilians, we are appalled at the casual invocation of such savagery.

When we see protesters at Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade compare the genocide of the Holocaust equivalently to the Israeli army’s actions to defeat Hamas in self-defense of their people, we are shocked.

When we see many people and news organizations remain neutral about the basic absurdity of these claims and actions, we are deeply disappointed.

More than anything, we are worried, quite naturally, given the twists and turns of history, about where these actions and sentiments could eventually lead. Now, this is no intellectual exercise for us. For many Jewish people, it is like a matter of survival, informed once again by history—in this case, very personal history to me.

Take the story of my own family. My grandfather came to Ellis Island at a very young age from Eastern Europe without an education, without a penny to his name. He was a street urchin, stealing apples from the pushcarts just to survive, but he dreamt of a brighter future for himself and his family.

My grandfather ended up with the paper workers in Utica, NY, and he helped form the union there. But he lost his job in the lead-up to World War II, so he came back to New York City and bought a little exterminating business.

His son—my father—followed in his footsteps and eventually took over that exterminating business. My father struggled in that job, barely making ends meet, but together with my mother, he provided a stable and loving home in Brooklyn for my siblings and me, where we were able to flourish.

Because of the tolerance and the openness and the opportunity that courses through all of American life, I now stand before you as the majority leader of the United States Senate—the highest elected office a Jewish person has ever attained in the history of this country. Only in America—only in America—could an exterminator’s son grow up to be the first Jewish party leader in the Senate.

But it must be said also that this is not the norm in the grand and long scheme of Jewish history. While my grandfather came to America and encountered opportunity, many of his siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, and other family members remained behind in Eastern Europe.

When I was still a young boy, I was told why many branches of our family tree stopped growing forever.

In 1941, when the Nazis invaded Ukraine, then part of Galicia, they asked my great-grandmother—the matriarch of the family, the wife of a locally revered rabbi—to gather her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren on the porch of her home, which was located in the town square. As more than 30 people gathered on the porch, aged 85 to 3 months, the Nazis forced the remaining Jewish citizens of the town to gather in the town square and watch.

When the Nazis told my great-grandmother “You are coming with us,” she refused, and they machine-gunned down every last one of them—the babies, the elderly, everybody in between.

This story resonated deeply in my heart when I first started learning the details of the October 7 massacre in Israel. I was in China with a bipartisan delegation of my fellow Senators trying to get President Xi Jinping to open up Chinese markets to American companies and stop the flow of fentanyl across our borders.

As the horrors of October 7 started coming into focus, the Israeli Ambassador to China shared with me the story of what she heard had just happened in one of the kibbutzim called Be’eri. Hamas terrorists entered the kibbutz on October 7 and killed more than 120 Jewish residents, from the elderly to babies.

Sadly, it was not the first time I heard of such evil being committed against the Jewish people. Most, if not all, Jewish Americans know stories similar to that of my family. Most, if

not all, of us learned this story at a young age. It will be imprinted on our hearts for as long as we live.

All Jewish Americans carry in them the scar tissue of this generational trauma, and that directly informs how we are experiencing and processing the rhetoric of today. We see and hear things differently from others because we are deeply sensitive to the depravation and horrors that can follow the targeting of Jewish people if it is not repudiated, which brings me back to today.

While many protesters no doubt view their actions as a compassionate expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people, for many Jewish Americans, we feel in too many instances, some of the most extreme rhetoric gives license to darker ideas that have always lurked below the surface of every question involving the Jewish people. Anti-Semites have always trafficked in coded language and action to define Jewish people as unworthy of the rights and privileges afforded to other groups.

I believe there are plenty of people who chant “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” not because they hate Jewish people but because they support a better future for Palestinians. But there is no question that Hamas and other terrorist organizations have used this slogan to represent their intention to eliminate Jewish people not only from Israel but from every corner of the Earth.

Given the history of oppression, expulsion, and state violence that is practically embedded in Jewish DNA, can you blame the Jewish people for hearing a violently anti-Semitic message loud and clear anytime we hear that chant?

We shouldn’t accept this sort of language from anybody any more than we accept other racist dog whistles, like invoking “welfare queens” to criticize safety net programs or calling COVID-19 the “Chinese virus.” And that goes for extreme rightwing Jewish settlers who also use deplorable language and who don’t believe there should be any Palestinians between the river and the sea.

Anti-Semites are taking advantage of the pro-Palestinian movement to espouse hatred and bigotry toward Jewish people. But rather than call out this dangerous behavior for what it is, we see so many of our friends and fellow citizens, particularly young people who yearn for justice, unknowingly aiding and abetting their cause.

Worse, many of our friends and allies whose support we need now more than ever during this moment of intense Jewish pain have brushed aside these concerns. Suddenly, they don’t want to hear about anti-Semitism or the ultimate goal of Hamas. When I have asked some of the marchers what they would do about Hamas, they don’t have an answer. Many don’t seem to care. So Jewish Americans are left alone—at least in our eyes—to ponder what this all means and where it could lead.

Can you understand why the Jewish people feel isolated when we hear some praise Hamas and chant its vicious slogan? Can you blame us for feeling vulnerable only 80 years after Hitler wiped out half the Jewish population across the world while so many countries turned their back? Can you appreciate the deep fear we have about what Hamas might do if left to their own devices? Because the long arc of Jewish history teaches us a lesson that is hard to forget: Ultimately, we are alone.

As a teenager growing up halfway across the world from Israel in Brooklyn during the 1950s and 1960s, I remember this feeling of aloneness myself. When many of the world's airlines boycotted Israel so that they could maintain business with the Arab world, I admired Air France, as a little boy, because only they would fly to Israel. I preferred to drink Coca-Cola to Pepsi because Coca-Cola did business in Israel and refused to participate in a biased boycott. Later, I remember—in June of 1967—walking in solitary silence to class at Madison High School with a transistor radio held to my ear, listening to the news reports about the Six-Day War and praying to God that Israel would survive.

On top of feeling alone, the second dominant feeling that Jewish people have endured throughout history has been the sting of the double standard, which is the way the world has practiced anti-Semitism over and over again.

To the Jewish people, the double standard has been ever present and is at the root of anti-Semitism. The double standard is very simple: What is good for everybody is never good for the Jew. And when it comes time to assign blame for some problem, the Jew is always the first target. And in recent decades, this double standard has manifested itself in the way much of the world treats Israel differently than anybody else.

The double standard was made clear to me when I was in college. I remember the day when the great and articulate Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Abba Eban, was invited to come lecture on campus while the Students for a Democratic Society and the Progressive Labor Party were waging a campaign against Israel's right to exist.

Two thousand people gathered in the large auditorium to see Ambassador Eban, and the members of the SDS and PLP sat in the gallery and hung a banner saying "Fight the Zionist Imperialists."

When the members of the SDS and PLP tried to shout him down, Eban pointed his finger to the protesters in the gallery, and with his Etonian inflection, he calmly but strongly delivered a statement I will never forget and that I will paraphrase now.

He said: I am talking to you, up there in the gallery. Every time a people gets their statehood, you applaud them. The Nigerians, the Pakistanis, the

Zambians—you applaud their getting statehood. There is only one people, when they gain statehood, you don't applaud—you condemn it—and that is the Jewish people.

We Jews are used to that, he said. We have lived with a double standard throughout the centuries. There were always things the Jews couldn't do. Everyone could be a farmer but not the Jew. Everyone could be a carpenter but not the Jew, he said. Everyone could move to Moscow but not the Jew. And everyone can have their own state but not the Jew.

There is a word for it, he said to them. That is anti-Semitism, and I accuse you in the gallery of it.

And the protesters slinked off.

This double standard persists in America today, and it is once again leaving Jewish people to feel isolated and alone.

In the immediate aftermath of October 7, an attack on defenseless civilians—the elderly, women, babies—a good number of people skipped over expressing sympathy for its victims in their haste to blame the attack on the past actions of the Israeli Government.

Can anyone imagine a horrific terrorist attack in another country receiving such a reception?

And when Hamas terrorists actively hide behind innocent Palestinians, knowing that many of those civilians will die in the Israeli response, why does the criticism for any civilian death seem to fall exclusively on Israel and not at all on Hamas?

My heart breaks for the thousands of Palestinian civilians who have been killed or are suffering in this conflict—so many children. And I have urged the Israeli Government to minimize civilian casualties on many occasions. But by committing such heinous atrocities on October 7 before sneaking back into their tunnels underneath hospitals and refugee camps in Gaza, Hamas has knowingly invited an immense civilian toll during the war, exploiting the double standard that so much of the world applies to Israel.

Of course—let me repeat—that does not relieve Israel of the responsibility to protect innocent Palestinian lives, and I have been among the first to tell Israeli leaders they must act according to international law. I am also fighting for critical humanitarian aid for Palestinians that this Senate, under my leadership, is working to deliver.

So I rise in this Chamber today. I am speaking up to issue a warning, informed by lessons of history too often forgotten. No matter what our beliefs, no matter where we stand on the war in Gaza, all of us must condemn anti-Semitism with full-throated clarity wherever we see it before it metastasizes into something even worse because, right now, that is what Jewish Americans fear most.

The spike in anti-Semitism we are experiencing right now in America began after the worst instance of violence committed against Jewish people

since the Holocaust. The vitriol against Israel in the wake of October 7 is all too often crossing the line into brazen and widespread anti-Semitism, the likes of which we haven't seen for generations in this country, if ever, which is why we need to name it clearly anytime we see it.

After October 7, when boycotts were organized against Jewish businesses in Philadelphia that have nothing to do with Israel, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when swastikas appeared on Jewish delis on the Upper East Side, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when protesters in California shouted at Jewish Americans, "Hitler should have smashed you," that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when a Jewish U.S. Senator was violently threatened for her views on Israel, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when students on college campuses across the country who wear a yarmulke or display a Jewish star are harassed, verbally vilified, pushed, even spat upon and punched, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when an author in a prominent leftwing magazine labeled the pro-Israeli rally in Washington a "hate rally," that is anti-Semitism. I attended that rally—like tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of others—because I believe there should be a place of refuge for the Jewish people, not because I wish violence on Palestinians or any other people.

And, Mr. President, after October 7, when students at Hillcrest High School in Queens ran rampant in the hallways and demanded the firing of a teacher—these are high school students demanding the firing of a teacher—just because that teacher attended a rally supporting Israel and forced her to hide in a locked office for hours while staff struggled to regain control, that is anti-Semitism.

Walking out of the school to march in support of Palestinians is completely legitimate, but forcing a Jewish teacher to remain—as she described—locked in an office because she attended a rally in support for Israel is anti-Semitism, pure and simple.

In fact, Mr. President, the teacher whom I am speaking about is sitting in the Gallery today, right now. I invited her to come and listen, and I am truly honored that she accepted my invitation. That is true courage. I believe it shows just how strongly so many Jewish Americans feel about the issue.

She has requested anonymity, which I ask everybody present and everyone in the media to please respect, but I say to her from the bottom of my heart: Thank you for being here. Thank you for caring.

I have just listed a few of the so many examples—there are so many more—of how the pure, unadulterated anti-Semitism has dramatically increased since October 7, but the roots of pluralistic, multiethnic democracy are deep in America. This is a place

where Jewish people have been able to flourish alongside so many other immigrant groups. We must never lose sight of just how special that is, nor must we ever stop fighting for it.

All Americans share a responsibility and an obligation to fight back whenever we see the rise of prejudice of any type in our midst, to preserve this Nation as a promised land of refuge, as a land that honors the dignity of every individual, as a land of opportunity for all.

So my plea—my plea, my fervent plea—to the American people of all creeds and backgrounds is this: First, learn the history of the Jewish people who have been abandoned repeatedly by their fellow countrymen. I say this particularly to younger people who didn't live with any of this history. Learn the history of the Jewish people who have been left isolated and alone to combat anti-Semitism through the centuries.

Second, reject the illogical and anti-Semitic double standard that is once again being applied to the plight of Jewish victims and hostages, to some of the actions of the Israeli Government, and even to the very existence of a Jewish state. That is a double standard. There is no ducking from it.

Third, understand why Jewish people defend Israel—not because we wish harm on Palestinians but because we fear a world where Israel is forced to tolerate the existence of groups like Hamas that want to wipe out all Jewish people from the planet.

Some of us watched this film, which the public can't see, which showed the brutality and viciousness that every Israeli citizen and every Jew feels.

We fear a world where Israel, a place of refuge for Jewish people, will no longer exist. If there is no Israel, there will be no place—no place—for Jewish people to go when they are persecuted in other countries.

As an adult, I remember watching my grandfather, one of the few in his family to survive the Holocaust, being overwhelmed by emotion and breaking down in tears when he saw Israel for the first time. This had nothing to do with politics or with money or with racism or oppression. It was deeply human—the emotional catharsis of a man whose family was uprooted and exterminated finally stepping foot in the place of refuge for his people, the place that the Jewish people have yearned for not just for decades, for centuries, but for millennia.

So many of my aunts and uncles and cousins and nieces and nephews would be alive today had Israel existed before World War II, as I said before.

Many Jewish Americans fear what the future may bring based on the repeated lessons of history. Many Jewish Americans see clear anti-Semitism in the double standard that is being wielded by too many opponents of Israel, and we see it in attacks on Jewish people for simply being Jewish, apart from having anything to do with

Israel. And maybe worst of all, many Jewish Americans feel alone to face all of this, abandoned by too many of our friends and allies in our greatest time of need, as anti-Semitic hate crimes skyrocket across the country.

I implore every person, every community, every institution to stand with Jewish Americans—not to ignore it, not to shrug your shoulders—to denounce anti-Semitism in all its forms, especially the double standard that has been wielded against the Jewish people for generations to isolate us.

The time for solidarity must be now. Nothing less than the future of the American experiment hangs in the balance. Building a more perfect Union, one that fulfills our founding ideals, is our longest and most solemn struggle as a country. And as Americans, we are called on to do all we can to achieve that higher standard.

We are stewards of the flames of liberty, tolerance, and equality that warm our American melting pot and make it possible for Jewish Americans to prosper alongside Palestinian Americans and every other immigrant group from all over the world.

Are we a nation that can defy the regular course of human history where the Jewish people have been ostracized, expelled, and massacred over and over again? I believe—truly believe in my heart—that the answer can and must be a resounding yes, and I will do everything in my power as Senate majority leader, as a Jewish American, as a citizen of a free society, as a human being, to make it happen.

Ken y'hi ratzon. May it be God's will. I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHATZ. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I had an opportunity to watch the majority leader's speech this morning. It was extraordinary. I want to compliment him for providing a history lesson for Americans about the history of the Jewish people and putting it in context with the conflict that is underway.

So I want to thank him and associate myself with his remarks. I share his disgust at the alarming rise of anti-Semitism in America—and around the world—in the wake of the October 7 attacks.

So, again, I stand with him in condemning this hatred. And I stand with our ally, Israel, as it defends, literally, its right to exist.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, on another subject, Border security is actually national se-

curity. This is not just a statement of legislative priorities or partisan politics; it is a fact of human history.

The Senate has little more than 2 weeks to deliver supplemental legislation on the four urgent national security priorities. And each one of them deals directly with the questions of border and sovereignty.

For over a decade, Putin has been trying to redraw the borders of Europe. He has invaded and occupied Georgia and Ukraine. He has attempted assassinations and influenced operations on foreign soil. And he has exploited humanitarian crises to weaponize migrant flows to Europe, including, most recently, at the border of Finland.

Meanwhile, the Hamas terrorists who rule Gaza violated sovereign borders on their way to slaughtering 1,200 Israelis and taking hundreds more hostage. These savages' stated objective is to erase the borders of the state of Israel "from the river to the sea."

China, for its part, is also keenly focused on challenging borders. The PRC has used force in an attempt to gain the upper hand along its border with India. It has expanded its military footprint in the South China Sea and threatened to resolve longstanding territorial disputes with multiple neighbors by force. And China's historic investments in military modernization are aimed at threatening Taiwan's sovereignty and bringing the island to heel.

Borders matter. Sovereignty matters. The United States is a global superpower with global interests. And we have an interest in preventing autocrats and terrorists from trampling the borders of Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. Because if we leave them unchecked, these aggressors will keep challenging borders and keep starting wars.

Borders are intrinsically and universally about a nation's security. Controlling and defending them is the essential predicate of sovereignty. So it is not by accident that, in addressing urgent national security priorities, Senate Republicans are working so hard on policy changes to restore security to Americans on borders.

Trying to clean up the Biden administration's border crisis isn't some arbitrary interest; that is, unless you ask the Democratic leader. According to the senior Senator from New York, the national security crisis his party has abetted at the southern border is "extraneous" to the national security supplemental before the Senate. The way our colleague sees it, securing our own borders as we help our allies and partners defend their sovereignty would be dangerous.

Dangerous? Here in the real world, what is dangerous is denying the humanitarian and national security crisis festering at America's southern border on President Biden's watch. What is dangerous is accepting the record numbers of illegal aliens surging across our borders as the new normal. What is

dangerous is defending open borders and a broken asylum and parole system, even at the risk of urgent assistance to our partners in Ukraine, Israel, and Asia.

The Biden administration's open borders will rank among its biggest national security failures, plain and simple. But if Senate Democrats refuse to take border security policy changes seriously, they will also be wrapping American weakness up as a Christmas gift to Russia, China, and Iran.

Borders are an essential element of national security. They are not extraneous. We must secure and defend sovereign borders beginning right here at home. If we fail to uphold this basic, fundamental responsibility, America and our friends around the world will pay dearly.

BIDENOMICS

Mr. President, now on another matter, President Biden is on the road today, and he is facing an uphill battle to convince the American people that Bidenomics is somehow working. For months, the President has been touring the country with a rosy assessment of the economy on his watch. He has been telling working Americans what the administration's obsession with radical climate policy is doing for them. But by overwhelming margins, the American people haven't been buying what the President is selling. The polls continue to show that for millions of families, Bidenomics is just a code for higher prices, shrinking paychecks, and lower quality of life.

The entire Nation watched in realtime as the Biden administration's war on domestic energy drove the price of gas and home heating through the roof. Taxpayers watched Washington Democrats turn their hard-earned dollars into subsidies for blue-State liberals' favorite electric cars and home appliances.

Here is how one analysis put it:

The typical American household must spend an additional \$11,434 annually just to maintain the same standard of living they enjoyed in January of 2021.

An extra \$11,000 a year just to stay afloat. But the Biden administration's latest tactic appears to be publicly congratulating itself that prices on some everyday staples were actually rising slower than the record paces that were set during their time in office.

The President himself has even wagged his finger at American growers, manufacturers, and retailers to "stop the price gouging" now that "inflation has come down."

Well, the Bidenomics strategy apparently depends on working Americans ignoring the reality they live in every day. The White House seems to be counting on middle-class families to forget about the 40-year-high inflation they spending binge helped create. They want the country to set aside the average food prices that have risen 20 percent since President Biden took office.

Well, it doesn't look like the American people have any intention of suspending their disbelief about Bidenomics. And who on Earth would blame them?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from New York.

ISRAEL

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I am here once again to highlight the stories of the people who have been and continue to be held hostage by Hamas. I am so happy to hear that several of our hostages, whose families I have worked with, have been finally returned. They include: 4-year-old Abigail Mor Edan, whose parents were both murdered in front of her eyes and who now faces the horrible process of healing from the many traumas she underwent; Danielle Aloni and her 5-year-old daughter Emilia. They had been visiting Danielle's sister Sharon, her brother-in-law David, and their 3-year-old twins Emma and Julie on the day of the attack, when all of them were taken captive. Sharon, Emma, and Julie have also just been released, but David still remains in captivity.

I am so grateful that members of another family I have worked with have also been released. They include 67-year-old mother Shoshan, sister Adi, Adi's two young children Naveh and Yahel, Aunt Sharon, and Sharon's 12-year-old daughter Noam.

It has been heartening to see these families reunited with their loved ones, to see the joy and the indescribable relief, and I am grateful to the Biden administration for making these reunions possible. But, of course, many, many more people still remain in captivity, including Emma and Julie's father, David, and Naveh and Yahel's father, Tal.

These families have already endured the worst traumas imaginable, and yet now they have still been ripped apart, with no idea when they will see their fathers and brothers and sons again. Tal is a 38-year-old who reads a lot and loves to explore new topics as well as exercise and play sports. He and his family like to travel in the desert areas in southern Israel and spend time near the Sea of Galilee.

David is a talented 33-year-old actor who lived with his family in Nir Oz. He and his family woke up on the morning of October 7 to the sound of bombs and sought refuge in their home's bomb shelter. But when Hamas set fire to their house, the shelter filled with smoke and forced them out to meet the terrorists.

His American family last saw him in a video shared by Hamas where he can be seen in the back of a truck with Sharon and one of the twins. A survivor who was able to escape says she spoke briefly with him and that he said to her:

I know that I left the safe room with two babies, and now I have only one.

I can only imagine what it must be like for him now to have both of his babies ripped away.

These two families, these fathers, don't deserve to be separated from their families. They don't deserve to be kept in horrific conditions, potentially with little food.

As joyful as it has been to see some of the hostages reunited with their families, we must not stop pushing for the release of all the remaining hostages. I will continue to work with their families and with the Biden administration to advocate for these individuals, and I will not rest until we get every hostage, including the nine Americans, home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I want to speak to the issue of our southern border because I think it is a really important and relevant issue with respect to the national security package that we are considering or that we will be, I think, at some point, considering here in the Senate that deals with many of the national security crises we face around the world.

And as I think about this issue, I am always reminded that as a one-generation-removed-from-immigrant individual in this country—my grandfather came here back in 1906—I am reminded that we are a nation of immigrants.

We have had, throughout our history, a welcoming culture in this country. We are a country that is made up of people from all over the world, and I am representative of that, as I said, one generation removed.

It is also important to remember that we are a nation of laws, first and foremost. Ronald Reagan once said:

A nation without borders is not a nation.

I have heard it paraphrased that a nation that can't control its borders can't control its destiny. And I believe that to be true.

I think what we have right now at our southern border is a situation that has just run amok. It really has. You cannot defend what is happening at our southern border if you believe we are a nation of laws or, for that matter, if you believe we are a nation of immigrants because you have to have a legal way to get into this country. All countries do that, and the United States, as I said, is a very welcoming nation. If you look at the number of people who come here every year as refugees, the number of people coming to this country, you add up all the other countries around the world and the number of people they allow into their countries, the United States exceeds that, and that, to me, is a remarkable testament to the welcoming nature of this country.

But it is welcoming in the sense that it is done within the context of the rule of law, and that, first and foremost, has to be front and center as we think about this issue.

What we have right now at our southern border is essentially a huge welcome sign, a huge green light to come

across our southern border and to do it illegally. That is in direct contradiction and violation of everything that our Nation is about as a nation of laws.

And so as I talk about this issue, and we talk about it in the context of national security, it has become a national security issue because, once again, there has been another record set when it comes to the border and not the good kind, I should say, of record. This administration now has, during the month of October, seen 240,988 individuals be apprehended attempting to illegally cross our southern border. That is the worst October on record, and that is on top of the three previous months which were historic records; the month of September, 270,000 people apprehended at our southern border trying to come into the country illegally.

So the highest October number ever recorded, and those are just the individuals—I would remind people—who were apprehended. The month of October saw an average of 1,000 “got-aways” per day, individuals whom the Border Patrol saw but were unable to apprehend. That is another 30,000 people, unidentified individuals, entering our country in just 1 month, and there is no telling how many unknown “got-aways” there were during that same period. It suggests a situation at our southern border that is completely and totally out of control.

The closing of the fiscal year in September marked the third successive, recordbreaking year of illegal immigration at our southern border under the Biden administration. As the October numbers point out, the end of this crisis is nowhere in sight.

If you think about it, the problems here are really too many to count. The men and women of the Border Patrol are under incredible strain and have been for pretty much the entirety of the Biden administration. Border cities are struggling to deal with the ceaseless influx of migrants, and major cities in other areas of the country are now discovering what border cities have been going through.

Just as a point of fact, big cities, the city of New York, the mayor of New York announced that he will be freezing the hiring of police officers in New York, closing libraries, and cutting education funding—this is in New York City—to deal with the migrant crisis, absent an infusion of Federal dollars coming in from Washington, DC.

So this is creating not problems just on our southern border but for communities all across this country, including the largest communities in the United States of America. The situation we currently have in front of us is encouraging migrants to undertake the dangerous journey to our southern border, sometimes with tragic results.

So I say that our national security is in jeopardy because a border security problem is a national security problem. This isn't a matter of speculation. We know, for a fact, that dangerous indi-

viduals are attempting to make their way across our southern border every month.

During fiscal year 2023, 169 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist were apprehended attempting to illegally cross our southern border. This is 2023, fiscal year 2023, 169 people on the Terrorist Watchlist trying to come across our southern border—18 in the month of September, another 13 in the month of October.

Those are the people who are apprehended at the southern border. That doesn't count the “got-aways.” My assumption is, if they are on the Terrorist Watchlist, they are going to be pretty good at evading the authorities, meaning that there are people trying to come into this country on a daily basis who are on the Terrorist Watchlist.

On top of that, you have thousands of what they call special interest aliens—and those are individuals who may pose a threat to the United States who have been apprehended at our southern border over the past 2 years—thousands of special interest aliens. Again, the numbers we have refer only to those who have been apprehended.

As I said, last month alone, 30,000 identified individuals made their way illegally into our country—I should say unidentified individuals; in other words, the “got-aways,” the unknowns. Many of them may simply have been seeking a better life. That is entirely possible, but it is not only possible, but I would say likely, that some of them were dangerous individuals who should not be entering our country.

This work period, we expect to take up supplemental spending legislation to address national security priorities, notably, support for our allies like Israel and Ukraine. And one national security priority this legislation must address is border security.

As the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel reminds us, national security requires constant vigilance, and our Nation is simply not secure as long as we are dealing with a massive flow of illegal immigration at our southern border. We must get this crisis under control.

Senators GRAHAM, LANKFORD, and COTTON have been working to craft a set of border security measures for inclusion in the national security supplemental focused on the two areas in obvious need of reform: parole and asylum.

Under our current asylum system, a large percentage of individuals claiming asylum are released into the interior of the country after initial screening with court dates up to a decade later. The Associated Press reported that in March, 77 percent of individuals claiming asylum passed the initial screening.

In practice, this means that thousands of individuals who have entered our country illegally end up taking residence in our country, possibly, for a number of years, given our immigration court backlog. That is a problem.

Our parole system is in trouble as well. In fiscal year 2022, the Biden administration granted parole to 417,326 individuals. And that is because the Biden Department of Homeland Security has instituted an overly permissive application of parole, which means that, again, tens of thousands who have not been granted legal status and who may not have a case for remaining in the United States have been taking up residence in our country with instructions to report back a year or more into the future for further review of their status.

Now, given the backlog and overwhelmed nature of our parole system, this ends up being de facto permanent residence. Needless to say, this invites abuse, and individuals are availing themselves of these flawed policies to gain entry to our Nation. Any supplemental legislation must not only deal with border security generally but with our asylum and parole system specifically, if we want to get the crisis at our southern border under control.

Our porous southern border is a massive national security vulnerability. Republicans know it, and while they may not always admit it, I think my Democrat colleagues know it as well.

It is time for them to act on that knowledge and join Republicans to pass real border security measures as part of the national security supplemental.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, before I begin my prepared remarks, I just want to acknowledge Leader SCHUMER for his extraordinary, personal, compelling, and essential remarks on the rise of anti-Semitism across the country and across the planet. It was needed; it was accurate; and it touched me. So thank you, Mr. Leader.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, we are about to see the beginning of COP28. That is the annual international meeting to take climate action. This one is a little different because America finally took historic action on climate, and it is working.

And so the message that America will be bringing to this COP—COP28, which begins in Dubai tomorrow—is that we finally did it. We finally took the biggest climate action in human history. Is it enough? No.

Is it more than we have ever done before? Absolutely, it is more than we have ever done before.

And the COP is a unique opportunity for governments across the world to work together and coordinate their response to what is the greatest challenge of our time: the climate crisis. Climate change is getting worse by the year, and it is affecting more and more people in every corner of the planet, including all of us in the United States. Recognizing that, Congress took the biggest climate action in American history a year ago with the Inflation Reduction Act, in addition to setting

targets to dramatically reduce carbon emissions in the United States, the IRA also made historic investments to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future. It was an ambitious piece of legislation. But the truth is, the IRA's impact in just a year—just a year—has surpassed even the most hopeful projections. And none of the parade of horrors that the fossil fuel industry articulated ended up happening: Prices did not go up for regular consumers; the economy didn't crash; and all of the things that, frankly, the clean energy side said was going to happen—and some of it, in my view, was aspirational, like hundreds of thousands of new union clean energy jobs—it actually is happening. So everything we said was going to happen, happened. None of the things that they were fearing would happen did happen, and it is working faster and better and more powerfully than even our experts were able to project. But there is still more to come.

The IRA has proof that big, bold climate action is not just possible, but it benefits everyone, and it offers a roadmap for the rest of the world. As my dear friend and family member—may she rest in peace—Madeleine Albright always said that “We are the indispensable nation.” The United States is the indispensable Nation.

And I look at the presiding officer, and I think you know this: When we go abroad, it is a little shocking the extent to which people are hanging on tenterhooks wondering, What does the United States think? You don't need to be the head of state for people to still be especially tuned in to, What is the United States going to do? What are they going to say? What actions are they going to take?

And, finally, after the first COP, where we organized through President Obama's leadership global climate action and we had some momentum, and then we lost our momentum. Federal action on climate basically ground to a halt. So we were going to these COPs to say: Hey, we are still in. We are still committed to climate action. Yes, it is true that we weren't able to do something this year or last year or the year before, but we are still in. And it was hard to make that case year over year over year as the indispensable Nation while we try to tell everybody to take climate action and we hadn't yet done it at the scale that was necessary.

Well, this is different. Now we have done it. It is working. It is equal to the task in front of us. And every other nation should capitalize on this opportunity and do their own version of the Inflation Reduction Act. This is a real chance for us to put words into action. We have been talking about what to do about climate for years. It is time to finally put the resources and the money behind those pledges as time runs out.

What absolutely cannot happen in this conference is that it cannot be co-opted by fossil fuel interests. Too many oil and gas companies are paying lip

service to addressing climate change, all the while actively expanding their fossil fuel enterprise.

Just this week, we saw alarming reports that the host of the COP was looking to cut deals with countries on oil and gas projects. Now, I know that he denied that. I know that the reporting is somewhat mixed, and I don't begrudge UAE chairing this COP. It is a rotating COP. It goes by region. UAE gets to chair it. That is not the problem.

The problem is the extent to which fossil energy companies, the American Chamber of Commerce, and other international corporations have decided to bear-hug this process to undermine it. And we have to be very, very wary. If there are fossil companies or energy companies that are both on the clean and the fossil side that want to be constructively engaged in how to take climate action, that is great. But we will be damned if we allow these companies to bear-hug the COP process to the point where it becomes meaningless.

And so myself, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator CARDIN, Senator HEINRICH, Senator MARKEY, and others will be watching this like a hawk.

NOMINATIONS OF MICAH W.J. SMITH AND SHANLYN A.S. PARK

Madam President, on another note, the Senate is about to vote on the first of two Hawaii nominees to the U.S. district court, Micah Smith and Judge Shanlyn Park. Both of them have had distinguished careers in law and public service and are extraordinarily qualified to serve as United States district court judges.

Micah Smith has been a Federal prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office for over a decade, most recently in the District of Hawaii where he serves as Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division and Criminal Civil Rights Coordinator. Those who know him are quick to highlight his balanced temperament and deep commitment to equal justice.

Likewise, Judge Shanlyn Park spent two decades as a public defender, giving a voice to those most in need, and has brought her integrity and sound judgment to the bench as a State court judge.

Both of these nominees represent the very best of Hawaii and will represent all of us well on the judiciary, and I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm them both to the Federal bench. They both had a bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee, and I am looking forward to a bipartisan vote on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes prior to the scheduled roll call vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I come to the floor to urge action on the

fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills that fund critical programs, programs that are so important to America and to American families, programs ranging from biomedical research to our national defense.

On November 1, the Senate passed its first package of three appropriations bills: the military construction and veterans affairs legislation, the Agriculture and FDA bill, and the Transportation and Housing bill. And due to the extraordinary work of the members of the Appropriations Committee, they passed by overwhelming bipartisan vote of 82 to 15.

Despite the Appropriations Committee working hard to report all 12 of the funding bills by the end of July, additional full-year appropriations bills have not been brought to the Senate floor. Instead, the Federal Government has been operating under short-term funding patches known as continuing resolutions since the start of the fiscal year on October 1. These temporary funding patches lead to harmful uncertainties, needless inefficiencies, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

One of the bills that I hope will be brought to the floor soon is the Department of Defense appropriations bill. This bill would provide critical resources for our military at a time when we are facing many complex threats from around the globe, including those posed by an imperialistic Russia, a hegemonic China, and an increasingly belligerent Iran and its proxies.

Earlier this summer, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the defense funding bill by a strong bipartisan vote of 27 to 1. This bill contains funding for key national security priorities, including providing our troops and their families with the pay and benefits that they deserve, expanding our naval fleet, and modernizing the nuclear triad, strengthening deterrence against China—our pacing threat—rebuilding our munitions stockpiles, and addressing military readiness and capability gaps.

Each day that the Department of Defense operates under a temporary funding measure rather than its full-year appropriations bill, important national security investments remain on hold. For example, the Department has identified more than 330 new programs or production increases that cannot proceed. This includes more than a dozen high-priority initiatives identified by the Air Force, 6 billion in Army transformation efforts, and multiyear procurement authority for the Virginia class submarines.

In a letter that was sent to the Appropriations Committee just today, Chairman C.Q. Brown, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff writes that “We cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under continuing resolution.”

In other words, continuing resolutions give China the upper hand.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of General Brown's letter be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Recently, some have called for simply passing a year-long continuing resolution for fiscal year 2024, essentially locking in last year's priorities, continuing to fund programs that should not be funded or should be reduced, and preventing the funding of new programs. I would like to take just a few moments to describe just how harmful that would be to our national defense. A year-long continuing resolution would simply fail to provide the resources needed to protect our Nation. For fiscal year 2024, it would reduce defense spending by 26.6 billion relative to the President's budget request and the Fiscal Responsibility Act and by 34.6 billion compared to the funding levels approved by the Appropriations Committee by that wide bipartisan vote.

So you can see the big difference that having a year-long CR would lock in completely inadequate funding levels, given the threats that we face. Many of the key national security priorities funded in the Defense bill would suffer under a year-long continuing resolution.

Let me give some specific examples. To respond to military recruitment challenges, the Senate committee-approved bill would invest in our men and women in uniform. It includes funding for the 5.2 percent military pay raise. As General Brown points out, a year-long CR would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel funding and exacerbate recruiting and retention challenges.

To offset the cost of the pay raise for the military, DOD would be forced to slow recruiting—the last thing we want to see happen—delay servicemembers' moves, and take other detrimental actions.

So this chart compares our committee bill versus a year-long CR. And as you can see, there are tremendous differences in quality-of-life issues for our servicemembers and the actual funding for the pay raise which will go into effect, but the Department would have to take money out of other personnel accounts.

Other quality-of-life initiatives in the bill, such as expanding prekindergarten for more than 4,000 children of servicemembers and improving living conditions for sailors serving aboard ships would not be able to proceed during a year-long CR. Our committee-passed bill also invests in the overdue modernization of all three legs of the nuclear triad. These efforts would be delayed under the yearlong CR because of a nearly \$3.4 billion funding shortfall.

At a time when China's Navy is already at least 80 ships larger than our own, the committee-approved bill includes record investments—more than \$33 billion—in Navy shipbuilding. It includes funding for two destroyers and

advance procurement for a much needed third.

In recent days, the capabilities of these ships and the professionalism and expertise of the sailors who serve aboard them have been on full display as they have downed numerous drones and missiles headed toward them and aimed also at Israel.

Two of these ships, I am proud to say, the USS *Carney* and the USS *Thomas Hudner*, were built at Bath Iron Works in my State.

Since October 7, Iranian-backed proxies have launched at least 73 attacks on U.S. servicemembers and bases. Our fleet is essential to protect those servicemembers and bases as well as Israel.

The Senate committee-approved bill also includes funding for two Virginia-class submarines, two frigates, and a downpayment on an amphibious ship, which is the Marine Corps' top unfunded priority. In addition to contributing to cost increases and delays in the delivery of ships to the Navy, a yearlong CR would result in only one *Virginia*-class submarine, one frigate, and potentially no funding for the amphibious ship or the third destroyer.

General Brown points out in his letter that 30 percent of the funding in the Navy shipbuilding request could not be spent.

The Defense bill also includes more than \$65 billion for capabilities or requirements related to the Indo-Pacific, including \$857 million to meet the highest priorities of the most senior U.S. military commander in the region and an additional \$981 million for other unfunded requirements listed as priorities by our military services focused on deterring China.

Our bill would authorize multiyear procurements for seven munitions critical to the region, such as long-range precision missiles, Patriot air defense missiles, and anti-ship missiles. Multiyear procurements provide stability and predictability to our defense industrial base and save taxpayer dollars. Neither the additional funding nor the authority to award these contracts would be possible under a yearlong CR.

Our committee-passed bill would ramp up investments in the U.S. defense industrial base. It would increase munitions procurement funding by 31 percent compared to the last fiscal year and includes \$1.8 billion to modernize 23 Army depots, arsenals, and ammo plants across 17 States. Under a yearlong CR, both of those initiatives would be blocked or delayed.

Our committee-passed bill also includes readiness investments that would be put at risk under a yearlong CR. Up to 75 Navy ship repair availabilities would be delayed or canceled, which would degrade the Navy's ability to deploy its fleet for operations, even as the Navy is maintaining a greater presence and projecting power in the Middle East since Hamas's terrorist attack against Israel.

There was just yesterday a news story talking about the Department of

Defense ordering an additional aircraft carrier strike group, air defenses, fighter jets, and hundreds of troops to the Middle East since the surprise terrorist attacks on Israel in an effort to prevent that conflict from spiraling into a regional war. But the problem is that the military, because it has not received its regular appropriations bill, is having to scramble to find the funding for this. Because these Middle East troop movements weren't planned, the Pentagon has had to pull money from existing operations and maintenance accounts. That means less money for training exercises and deployments that the military had already planned for this year.

Our Nation's security and our service men and women deserve better than a yearlong continuing resolution. In the letter sent today, General Brown writes that besides passing a supplemental, "the single greatest thing that Congress can do to enable the Department to execute our strategy is to enact a full-year appropriation."

Let's get our work done and pass the full-year funding bills. I urge my colleagues to work together. Let's meet the challenges our Nation faces.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT
CHIEFS OF STAFF,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
Chair, Committee on Appropriations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CHAIR: Thank you for the opportunity to share my view on the impact that a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) would have on the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Joint Force. In addition to the critical need for Congress to take action to support our allies and partners by passing the President's national security supplemental funding request, the single greatest thing that Congress can do to enable the Department to execute our strategy is to enact a full-year appropriation.

DoD has never operated under a year-long CR; it would be historically costly to the Joint Force. In a CR, the DoD's actual buying power is significantly impacted and degraded. Failing to fully fund the DoD would disrupt important progress made in fiscal year 2023. The National Defense Strategy lays out evolving security challenges, which require the Joint Force to modernize quickly or risk losing our strategic advantage. As I have said previously, we cannot outpace our pacing challenge while under a CR.

A year-long CR would prevent the DoD from executing numerous multi-year procurement contracts that are critical to meeting our requirements in the Indo-Pacific; delay or deny investments in important modernization projects; and create a significant shortfall in personnel funding.

Thousands of programs will be impacted with the most devastating impacts to our national defense being to personnel, nuclear triad modernization, shipbuilding and ship maintenance, munitions production and replenishment, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) priorities.

Personnel: A year-long CR would create a \$5.8 billion shortfall in military personnel funding and exacerbate recruiting and retention challenges. DoD would be forced to delay service member moves and slow recruiting to offset the costs of the 5.2 percent pay raise for the military.

Nuclear triad modernization: A year-long CR would delay nuclear triad modernization, including a delay in the procurement of the B-21 Raider and could prevent the award of the second Columbia class ballistic missile submarine.

Shipbuilding and ship maintenance: Under a year-long CR, 30 percent (\$9.7B) of the funding in the Navy shipbuilding budget request could not be spent and only one of two requested Virginia class submarines could be awarded. Additionally, a year-long CR would cancel or delay ship depot maintenance availabilities, impacting readiness.

Munitions production and replenishment: Under a year-long CR, DoD could not award multi-year procurement contracts to increase production capacity or replenish inventories for munitions critical to INDOPACOM, including long range anti-ship missiles, GMLRs (precision rockets), Patriot air defense missiles, the naval strike missile, and a long-range version of the joint air to surface standoff missile.

Pacific Defense Initiatives: A year-long CR would jeopardize \$1.3 billion in investments critical to DoD's INDO-PACIFIC posture including impacts to forward basing, sensor-to-shooter capabilities, long range radars, hypersonic defense, and investments in classified capabilities.

No new military construction projects: Military construction projects are, by definition, new starts, so a year-long CR could cause a year-long delay in construction projects intended to modernize our installations and improve quality of life.

Passing a full-year funding bill and the President's national security supplemental request would prevent these devastating impacts. It would also provide funding for critical weapons and equipment for our allies and partners while replenishing depleted DoD stocks and providing for robust investments in the defense industrial base.

We owe our servicemembers the tools they need to be successful. We have asked them to modernize and accelerate the future capabilities they need to continue to deter and project credible combat power. We need full appropriations to stay ahead of pacing, acute, and unforeseen challenges.

I appreciate your continued support for our Joint Force and look forward to our future engagements.

Sincerely,

CHARLES Q. BROWN, Jr.,
General, U.S. Air Force.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 379, Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, Jeanne Shaheen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz, John W. Hickenlooper, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination

of Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 319 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rounds
Booker	Kelly	Sanders
Brown	Kennedy	Schatz
Butler	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Mullin	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—42

Barrasso	Ernst	Paul
Blackburn	Fischer	Ricketts
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Braun	Hagerty	Romney
Britt	Hawley	Rubio
Budd	Hoeven	Schmitt
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Hickenlooper

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Iowa.

IRAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, if the Biden administration decides to allow a terrorist state access to billions of dollars, then, at a bare minimum, the Biden administration must perform exceedingly strict oversight of how that money is used.

It is pretty simple, common sense requires considering the attendant risk that this money gives to Iran. The Biden administration has created a serious problem that needs strict oversight.

More than all that, the Congress must also have the same regard of how the executive branch conducts its business in regard to these billions of dollars.

Today, I have an on-point example to present to my colleagues. In September of this year, the administration's State Department provided Iran access to \$6 billion as part of a prisoner swap agreement. Then, in mid-October, the United States and the Qatari Governments decided to refreeze these funds due to the

October 7 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel.

Hamas, an Iranian-funded terrorist organization, as we all know, attacked Israel and murdered civilians, seized hostages, and destroyed towns. Hamas committed unspeakable acts of terror and evil, not seen since the Nazis, toward Jewish people.

On October 12 of this year, Secretary of State Blinken addressed the international media and, in that address, claimed that the State Department has "strict oversight of the funds and retains the right to freeze them"—meaning freezing the \$6 billion.

Now, there had better be strict oversight—the taxpayers ought to require that—exceedingly strict oversight. I now ask: What did the Secretary of State mean when he said "strict oversight"?

I don't want lip service from the Secretary. I want details. So on October 12 of this year, I wrote a letter asking exactly that: What are the details?

My letter also sought to know what government Agencies are involved in this alleged oversight. What are the roles of the respective Agencies in this oversight? What enforcement mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance? How will the State Department be able to punish Iran if conditions of the \$6 billion is violated?

I also asked what components of the State Department are responsible for conducting this oversight, among other questions.

Almost a month past the 2-week deadline to respond, the State Department did finally send me a letter. That letter was very incomplete and a very insufficient response that failed to answer the essential question, using his words: What does "strict oversight" mean? The letter didn't deal with that, and it seems to be a pretty simple question.

The State Department letter meekly said: "The United States will have full visibility and will exercise strict oversight as to how and when the funds are used."

This isn't an answer; this is lip service. We are talking about billions of dollars accessible by a terrorist regime.

So as you would expect Senator GRASSLEY to do, on November 21, I sent a letter, a followup letter, to Secretary Blinken, informing him of his failed response and then again renewing my request for Congress and the American people to know and understand what the Secretary meant by the words he used of "strict oversight."

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

The Secretary made these oversight promises publicly in an international setting, and the Secretary has an obligation to explain himself what "strict oversight" is. If the State Department is engaging in strict oversight, then say what it is and give us, the Congress, the response, the details of that. The taxpayers deserve to know exactly

how the Biden administration plans to ensure proper oversight of \$6 billion to Iran.

This Senator, obviously, won't stop demanding answers, especially when it comes to a terrorist regime's access to billions of dollars that the United States has something to say about.

BUDGET

Madam President, then, on another subject, Iowa is home to roughly 28 different types of snakes. Some are venomous—copperheads and rattlesnakes. However, the one snake doing the most damage to Iowans is the snake that is not even in Iowa. So I would like to introduce you to the brown tree snake. The brown tree snake doesn't reside in Iowa, Washington, DC, or any other State represented within the Senate. That snake lives in Guam. That snake is not only damaging the native animals of Guam, it is wreaking havoc on the American taxpayers.

So this gets to money. The Federal Government's goal, from what I have been told, is to eradicate the snakes, and that is where millions of dollars comes in. Now, our government has been trying to do this for the last 30 years.

On June 7, 2023, I sent a letter to the Department of Defense, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Agriculture. I asked those three Agencies how they have spent taxpayers' money to eradicate this snake from Guam. After waiting 5 months and an additional request on August 3, I received responses from these Agencies. Alarming, none of the three were able to tell me how many of the snakes are thought to be on the island or the estimated timeline for the eradication. It seems to me, our government ought to have better statistics that tell us what their planning is and how their goals are being met, but you can see soon that they don't have that information.

So let me say, it is obvious, with all the taxpayers' money they are getting, they ought to at least have some sort of an estimate on this subject.

So what did my oversight find? We will start with the Department of Agriculture. That Department, from fiscal year 2000 until right now, its budget expenditures were over \$10 million. Now, that is a drop in the bucket compared to others.

This is what I learned from the Department of the Interior. That Department told me that from fiscal year 1993 to now, they have funded over \$90 million to support eradication, suppression, and interdiction of the brown tree snake.

Now, another Department, the Department of Defense, gave me this figure for the same fiscal years. It spent more than \$140 million.

How many more decades and hundreds of millions of dollars do we have to spend on this snake, and what kind of projects have the taxpayers funded related to this snake? I have got some examples for you. Four projects in fis-

cal years 2009, 2010, 2014, and 2018 related to the application of Tylenol-treated baits, which are poisonous to the snakes, \$2.9 million; \$600,875 for multiple public awareness campaigns to educate the public in Guam on how the snake affects the ecosystem and human health and other factors; \$376,659 for various research projects, including improved camera monitoring of the snake; caged bird colonies as superattractors with integrated snake trapping; and studying the efficacy of self-resetting kill traps; \$122,462 for purifying and testing gecko skin compounds; \$56 million in fiscal year 2023 for the brown tree snake barrier south multispecies barrier.

Now, that last one ought to really hit home for you. The Biden administration can't secure the southern border. Millions of immigrants are illegally crossing every year. According to reports in fiscal year 2023, 172 people on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist have been encountered at the border. How many on the Terrorist Watchlist who haven't been encountered that are "got-aways"? I guess we don't have a figure on that one. So the 172 are the ones that we know of.

Here, Congress and the Biden administration have no problem spending \$56 million on a barrier to secure land against a snake. This is a clear example of spending that is out of control and why Congress must perform more exacting oversight.

Sadly, this is not a new problem. On July 22, 2004, the late Senator from Arizona, John McCain, made the following remarks on this floor regarding earmarks identified in a defense appropriations bill for that year, 2004:

\$1 million for the Brown Tree Snakes. Once again, the brown tree snake has slithered its way into our defense appropriation bill. I'm sure the snakes are a serious problem, but a defense appropriations act isn't the appropriate vehicle to address this issue.

So here I stand, 20 years later, identifying that this snake has continued to wreak havoc on both the island of Guam and, of course, on the American taxpayers.

I recognize that the brown tree snake is a serious problem in Guam, but it has also become a serious problem robbing the American taxpayers, taking millions out of their billfolds without really any plan that I have been able to discover that the government knows how they are going to spend the taxpayers' money to eradicate this brown tree snake.

Congressional appropriations of taxpayer money will be subject to waste, fraud, and abuse without congressional oversight. Accordingly, that is exactly what is needed here to better determine if taxpayer money has been used as it should have and whether these spending levels are needed entirely or at all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. RICKETTS. Madam President, we have a humanitarian and national

security crisis at our southern border. Just last month, Customs and Border Protection encountered 241,000 contacts, people coming across that southern border. That is three times the amount that we had in October of 2020.

Since Joe Biden has been President, there have been 6.6 million border contacts and 1.8 million "got-aways." And the "got-aways"—those are the folks whom Customs and Border Protection, CBP, saw but couldn't encounter, couldn't get to. That is more than President Obama and President Trump's administration combined.

Children are being trafficked; people are dying; and the cartels are profiting. And my colleague from Iowa just referenced the southern border. In total, we have seen 172 people on the Terrorist Watchlist try to enter our country in the last year—169 at the southern border. And to put that in perspective, that number used to be in the single digits every year. Last month, it was 12. We are encountering more people on the FBI's Terrorist Watchlist in 1 month than we used to get in an entire year.

Border security is national security. Certainly, the events in Israel should bring home to us the danger of a border that is not properly protected. And it is President Biden's policies that have led to this humanitarian and security crisis.

Now, I have been down to the southern border four times, just recently as well, and I have talked to the folks at CBP, and, yes, they need some resources. Things like the aerostat blimps have been hugely successful in being able to counter the cartel's drones to monitor people trying to come across the border. So there are resources that we can provide to our southern border to help strengthen. But you know what the No. 1 thing they told me they needed? It was a change in policy because it is the policy that is driving all these people to take this dangerous journey to illegally cross into our country.

Well, now the Senate is going to take up border security, and President Biden's solution is to ask for more money to help process all the people coming across the border. That is not going to fly. If you are just processing them more efficiently coming across the border, you are not deterring anybody from coming across our border. It is the policies that are sending a message to people to come here illegally. The policy needs to change. So as we consider a bill—perhaps a supplemental bill where we are going to have border security in it—it must contain policy changes. The policy is what caused this. We have to change the policy.

But what are some of those policies? We see that we have an asylum system and a parole system that are broken. We need to address that, and then we must have a first safe country policy. You may say, what is a first safe country? Well, if you are seeking asylum and you are fleeing your home country,

what this policy says is you stop in the first safe country and you apply for asylum in the United States from there, not from within our own country.

I know there are people who don't like this idea, but let me tell you, Canada has this policy. So, for example, if you are traveling from Mexico through the United States to get to Canada and you want to seek asylum in Canada, you have to remain in the United States. That is their policy. That is the Canadians' policy.

Do you know who else has that policy? The United Kingdom. In fact, I have a chart right here with all the countries that have that policy—Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Ireland. In fact, not only does our northern neighbor have this policy, but 29 other countries have this policy that you have to remain in the first safe country. What does that mean? It means that if you are coming to our southern border, you must remain in Mexico. That is a part of the policy changes that we need to have. We must bring back "Remain in Mexico."

President Biden has direct responsibility for the humanitarian crisis on our southern border. Children are being trafficked. People are dying. The cartels are profiting off of all of this. He is responsible. If he is not going to act, we in the Senate must act.

My Republican colleagues and I have put forward commonsense solutions on how to address the issues at our southern border. We must have these policy changes if we are going to pass any sort of supplemental that is going to include additional funding for anything else.

The No. 1 issue we have here is addressing the humanitarian and national security crises. That is a priority for the American people, it is a priority for my Republican colleagues, and my Senate Democratic colleagues must make that their priority as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, today, I would like to discuss one of the many critical topics we face in the country, in the Congress, in the Senate—Federal spending. We are certainly focused upon the issues that we are trying to bring together in regard to an emergency supplemental, in regard to supporting Ukraine and Israel, combatting China in the South Pacific and around the globe, Iran terrorist activities, and, as the gentleman from my neighboring State of Nebraska indicated, issues involving our national security at our own borders.

Today, I want to take just a step back and indicate that we were on a path and I wish we would get back on a path of making certain that the appropriations bills that the Senate Committee on Appropriations has considered, amended, and approved are brought to the Senate floor.

There are 12 appropriations bills annually. The full committee has consid-

ered all 12 and passed all 12, but the Senate, this body, which is again using this week to consider nominations, still has all but three of those bills yet to consider. It is important that Federal spending is provided to keep our government open and functioning and functioning and open for the American people.

This topic has dominated a lot of conversations nationally now for months. We are operating under a continuing resolution that funds the Federal Government at its current level until mid-January or early February, when that current continuing resolution then expires.

I certainly support the efforts of Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY, the vice chairman and the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. I support their work. It is my hope that Leader SCHUMER will allow those appropriations bills and that process to continue. Three out of twelve is insufficient, and the consequences of our failure to address the remaining bills are consequential.

When considering appropriations bills, it is critical that, in my view, two core principles are established. First is that we must get our Federal spending under control. We borrow way too much money. The consequence will come to haunt us economically. Our ability to respond to national security issues is diminished when our spending is out of line with our revenues. Second, it is our duty to draft appropriations bills that are judicious, responsible, carefully tailored, and that we establish priorities and determine what the Nation's highest priorities are for the coming or current fiscal year.

Congress must start this work immediately and not wait for the final moments, not wait until the middle of January or the beginning of February. Otherwise, we are on a path once again to another continuing resolution or, as we said we would not do again, a significant and huge omnibus in which these bills are all packaged together, reducing transparency, reducing the understanding of not only members of the American public but reducing the capability of U.S. Senators to fully understand the nature of the bill and not giving the opportunity for my colleagues who don't serve on the Appropriations Committee to amend and alter the bills that our committee has approved.

A CR puts spending on auto pilot. It is the antithesis, it is the opposite of what these principles involve. The idea that the Federal Government should be funded next year at the same level as last year is wrong, and it is wrong that the same amount of funding ought to go to each program. Some things maybe ought to be eliminated. There are some things I know that should be eliminated. There are things that maybe are receiving the right amount of money. There may be things that are deserving, as the priorities change, of additional spending.

The best hope to avoid another CR and to avoid a much criticized omnibus spending bill at the end is to continue the process—the process we started on fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills, to consider them on the Senate floor and to move them forward.

Over the past 9 months, the Senator from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN, and I have worked to craft the appropriations bill for the subcommittee that we lead called Commerce, Justice, Science and to balance those two core principles: fiscal responsibility with thoughtful allocation of scarce resources.

The CJS bill, one of 12—one of those bills that have yet to be considered on the Senate floor, the Commerce-Justice-Science bill—provides funding for a host of Federal Agencies that play a critical role in the lives of every single American and certainly every single Kansan: the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, NASA, the National Weather Service, the National Science Foundation, and just a host of other activities which enjoy broad bipartisan support both here in Congress and among the American people.

With respect to fiscal responsibility, this bill, Commerce-Justice-Science for fiscal year 2024, cuts budget authority—actual Federal spending—by \$1.3 billion compared to the amount of money that was enacted in the previous fiscal year, fiscal year 2023. That is about an amount equal to 1.5–1½ percent below the current level of spending. So we are cutting spending in our appropriations process.

American families face painful cuts and challenges in their own budgets, and I think they can expect—or "should expect" is the way I guess I would say it—should expect government to prove that it can make the same kinds of difficult decisions. The fiscal year 2024 CJS bill crafted by Senator SHAHEEN and me delivers on that obligation, and I thank my colleagues on our Appropriations subcommittee, both Republicans and Democrats, for working together to accomplish that goal.

In Congress, every once in a while, we have a vote on the penny plan, the seemingly impossible to achieve notion that we should at least be able to cut Federal spending by 1 percent, one penny out of a dollar. Senator SHAHEEN and I have found a way to make that a penny and a half, a little more than 1 percent—1.5 percent. That is a savings of more than \$1.3 billion.

The second core principle that I approach in the appropriations process is that Congress must make careful and deliberate decisions about how we allocate resources. Our opportunity to do that comes from certainly the assistance of our experts in our budget arena but also a significant number of hearings in front of the committee in which people have the opportunity to come highlight each Agency, each Department, their budget priorities, and give

us a chance to ask questions and to pursue what the right balance is. We owe that obligation—making the right decisions—to the American taxpayer.

There are also areas that are vitally important where we from time to time include increases where appropriate to address new threats, new challenges, and new areas that are critical to the United States in our maintaining our competitive edge and our national security.

For example, in the fiscal year 2024 CJS bill, we provide resources to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST—home to some of the world's best scientists—to ensure that we understand both the promise and the pitfalls of artificial intelligence.

NASA stands on the verge of returning the first humans—perhaps, in this case, it sounds like the first woman—to the Moon in over 50 years. It was vitally important that we provide NASA with the resources necessary to execute the Artemis mission. There may be those who would say that is not a priority, but the Chinese would like nothing more than to beat us back to the Moon and to become the world's preeminent space power. We will not—should not—allow that to be the case.

The National Weather Service needs to recapitalize its weather satellites. These satellites are vital to people in Kansas as we predict the weather and determine the safety and economic well-being of our State. They are vital to determining new severe weather patterns, and they will save lives.

These examples are just a few of why it is important that we have an annual appropriations process to make the changes to address things that Americans care about and to deal with the things that have changed in our lives across the country.

America's needs and priorities are not static, they are not the same, nor should government's decisions on how to spend taxpayer dollars be, either.

This bill, the fiscal year 2024 CJS bill, even in the context of its savings, still manages to make responsible investments to address the newest and most important challenges facing our country.

I want to spend a moment longer on discussing the funding and oversight of the Department of Justice.

Crime. Crime across the country is increasing. It is a problem for almost every American and certainly every American family, and it is deserving of being prioritized by the U.S. Senate, the Congress, and the administration.

Like many Americans, I have serious concerns with many of the policies coming from the Biden Department of Justice. Many new regulations issued by ATF threaten to trample core constitutional rights and are often a solution in search of a problem. DOJ's investigative priorities are often designed to satisfy the loudest activist rather than the everyday American and their real concern, including sky-

rocketing violent crime across the country and in the State of Kansas. Crime is affecting even our safest communities, and Kansans and Americans are concerned about what Washington is doing to keep their families safe.

Fentanyl is also a crisis—has been and continues to be and grows. It is a growing crisis in our country. This is not just an assertion; again, the numbers speak for themselves.

After a year in which more than 100,000 Americans lost their lives to fentanyl and with the highest increase in deaths among infants over 1 year old, President Biden's budget for DOJ requires hiring only four new DEA special agents, the Drug Enforcement Agency's agents. Yet the President's budget request indicates that the DOJ needs more than 1,200—one thousand two hundred—new attorneys, primarily at the division that files civil lawsuits.

The DOJ's priorities have been and are misguided. When I became the top Republican—the chairman—on the CJS subcommittee, I made it a priority to meet with countless DEA, FBI, and ATF special agents, deputy U.S. marshals, prison correctional officers, intelligence analysts, and prosecutors in the field. I am immensely impressed by their professionalism, their courage, and their dedication to keeping the American people safe. Indiscriminate, thoughtless budget cuts will result in fewer deputy marshals to apprehend violent fugitives, fewer FBI agents to investigate terrorists and intelligence threats from China, fewer DEA agents to combat the Mexican cartels, fewer Federal prosecutors not just to arrest violent criminals but to send them to prison.

Instead of defunding Federal law enforcement, we should use the appropriations process to prioritize and to make deliberate and judicious decisions about the Department of Justice's priorities. This means providing funding for the core activities critical to public safety while rejecting these proposals that make less sense or no sense from the Biden administration.

To that end, the CJS bill cuts funding for the Department of Justice by \$817 million—a more than 2-percent cut. Within that amount, funding for the FBI's construction account is cut by \$591 million. These are exactly the types of careful cuts we were able to achieve while maintaining the jobs of thousands of agents and intelligence analysts and others who help us combat violent crimes, child predators, Mexican cartels, and foreign intelligence agents.

Additionally, in working with my Republican colleagues on the committee, we were able to address some of the worst errors and abuses by the DOJ in recent years. During the committee markup, I secured new legislative language to prohibit funding for the investigation of parents who peacefully protest school board meetings—a DOJ initiative epitomized by the outrageous school board memo. Senator RUBIO, my

colleague from Florida, secured new legislative language prohibiting the Department from targeting Americans for their religious beliefs.

To my colleagues who have deep reservations about the policies of the Department of Justice, know that I share those concerns; yet I believe we have prepared a responsible bill that makes meaningful investments in the Department of Justice and its law enforcement mission. The CJS appropriations bill is a credible demonstration of fiscal responsibility while making judicious and careful investments in programs and services that Americans strongly support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise today alarmed at Republicans' demands for drastic anti-immigrant policy changes in exchange for continued support for Ukraine.

For nearly 2 years, our allies in Ukraine have fought off Putin's unjust invasion with the support of the United States—support President Zelenskyy himself has said is essential to his country's success. But now, as Ukrainians fight to defend their country and democracy itself, Republicans are holding additional aid hostage in exchange for unrelated immigration policy changes.

In exchange for one-time funding for Ukraine, Republicans are demanding permanent policy changes that would further weaken our broken immigration system. The proposal put forward by several of my Republican colleagues earlier this month would further complicate our asylum system and sow further chaos—chaos—at the southern border. This plan would require asylum seekers to apply for asylum in every country through which they transit—a clear violation of international law that would effectively deny asylum to almost anyone outside of Mexico or Canada who cannot fly directly to the United States.

Similarly, raising the standard for initial asylum screenings, known as credible fear interviews, would require asylum seekers to present even more detailed asylum claims within just days of a traumatic journey to the United States, typically while being detained in DHS custody and without the assistance of counsel. By making it even harder for the most vulnerable to seek asylum, these changes would result in political dissenters and persecuted minorities being sent back to danger and, in some instances, to their deaths.

The Republicans' plan would also make the situation at the southern border more chaotic by eliminating the President's parole authority, which the Biden administration has used to create safe, orderly pathways for nationals from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to enter the United States. Eliminating this parole authority

would force vulnerable people from these countries to make a dangerous journey to our border to seek protection rather than applying for protection in advance.

As the only immigrant currently serving in the Senate, I know that the challenges confronting immigrants are not hypothetical. This isn't about statistics; it is about people—people desperate for opportunity and the hope of building a better life in our country. A plan that villainizes and degrades those seeking to enter our country is bad enough; but this plan does little to address the actual issues facing immigrants, failing to acknowledge the plight of DACA recipients, temporary protected status holders, and undocumented individuals living in the shadows while contributing to our communities and our economy.

Just this month, the Judiciary Committee, on which I sit, held a hearing on how to improve immigration courts. Immigration experts shared meaningful, thoughtful ways to improve this key component of our immigration system. Disappointingly but not surprisingly, sad to say, none of the solutions discussed at that hearing are included in the Republicans' proposal.

Beyond the problematic content of their proposal is the precedent that Republicans are attempting to set by tying one-time funding for Ukraine to permanent anti-immigrant policy changes. Pitting vulnerable groups against each other—Ukrainians fighting an unjust invasion and asylum seekers fleeing persecution—is a recipe for bad policymaking. Exchanging permanent policy changes for temporary funding all but guarantees additional Republican demands on immigration next year.

There was a serious effort to enact bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate in 2013. I was here then. I had just gotten elected to the Senate. The year 2013 was the last time this body attempted to address this issue of a broken immigration system in a comprehensive way. To this day, I consider that bill that we worked on in a bipartisan way in 2013 as one of the most important issues and bills I have ever worked on in the Senate.

Comprehensive immigration reform was needed then, and it is desperately needed even more now. I stand ready to work in good faith with anyone looking to meaningfully improve our Nation's badly outdated and broken immigration system. However, that is not what the current Republican proposal does.

The American people are tired of rhetoric. They are looking to us to act. I believe this body has the ability to come together and enact comprehensive immigration reform, and I hope we—Democrats and Republicans—both acknowledge that the immigration system is broken—can find the will to do so. We did in 2013, and we can do it again.

NOMINATIONS OF MICAH W.J. SMITH AND SHANLYN A.S. PARK

Madam President, on another note, I am glad that, later today, the Senate will vote to confirm Micah Smith and, tomorrow, Shanlyn Park, to be judges of the U.S. district court for the State of Hawaii.

Shanlyn Park, who currently serves as a Hawaii circuit court judge, was born and raised in Hawaii, where her career has been spent almost entirely in public service. After graduating from Chamainde University and the William S. Richardson School of Law, Judge Park served as a Federal public defender in Hawaii for 20 years. As a judge, she has earned high marks for her even-handed approach and well-reasoned, fair decisions.

Importantly, if confirmed, Judge Park would make history as the first native Hawaiian woman to serve as a Federal district court judge. It is high time and long overdue. Representation matters.

Like Judge Park, Micah Smith has also had an impressive legal career. After graduating from Lock Haven University and Harvard Law School, he clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and then on the Supreme Court for Justice Souter. He went on to become a Federal prosecutor—a job he has held for the last 12 years. He began at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and, in 2018, returned home to Hawaii to join the U.S. Attorney's Office in Honolulu.

I believe both nominees' experience, temperaments, and demonstrated commitment to public service, along with their deep roots in Hawaii, will make them excellent judges on Hawaii's district court. I look forward to voting to confirm them.

I know that we have also voted on cloture on Micah Smith. I thank my Republican colleagues for voting for Micah in a bipartisan way, and I look forward to their support for Shanlyn Park.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today to once again speak about a subject that President Biden and his administration are refusing to address, and that is this crisis on our southern border.

I have been extremely outspoken about this topic—many of us have—especially when it comes to the need for deterrence along our southern border, the alarming drug epidemic that continues to harm my State and the entire country, and the desperate need to make changes to our immigration policy and the laws that define our homeland security.

The American people see the numbers, but it is not just numbers; they see the actual human effects within their own cities and States of this rampant illegal immigration. It can no

longer be ignored. In just the past year, there have been more than 2.4 million illegal encounters on our southern border—we have all seen them on our television sets—and that is more than a 180-percent increase since fiscal year 2019. There have been 169 encounters with individuals on our country's Terror Watchlist—six times the number of the past year; and fentanyl seizures along the U.S.-Mexico border have hit record highs.

I see my fellow Senator from Kansas. He has spent a lot of time on this fentanyl issue because it is so devastating to our States.

More than 26,000 pounds of illicit fentanyl were seized along the country's southern border this past year, and this is just the data we know. It is hard to fathom that there are 600,000 "got-aways"—those are people who were not even disrupted in their journeys—drugs and threats to our national security that are streaming across our border that we might have missed.

This is truly and simply an unmitigated crisis. There is no doubt that this is leading to and sometimes already has created an unsustainable situation across this country. But don't just take my word for it. I will offer some quotes:

The federal government's lack of intervention and coordination at the border has created an untenable situation.

This issue will destroy New York City.

A federal crisis of inaction that is many years in the making.

These are all direct quotes from Democratic Governors and mayors across the country.

Across the aisle and across the country, we know that President Biden's rhetoric and lack of action on the southern border has created a historic problem. In fact, this is a 50-State problem. I hear about this topic from West Virginians frequently. Constituents have expressed border security concerns to me, things like the catastrophic, flawed, and failed Biden-Harris approach to immigration and the loss of control of our southern border; the vulnerable state that our communities are left in by the flow of human trafficking and illicit drugs currently coming across our border; and the need to bolster our national security with the increase in crossings by those on the Terror Watchlist.

My home State of West Virginia is not a border State, so to speak, but we are all border States now. We are no stranger to the strife and grief created by the flow of harmful narcotics into our communities.

From June 2022 to June 2023, West Virginia's provisional State data shows that an estimated 1,415 West Virginians died from overdoses. These are husbands, brothers, sisters, moms, and dads. It is indescribably sad.

Drug overdoses caused over 5,200 emergency room visits, and our EMS teams responded to over 6,300 calls of a suspected drug overdose. These numbers are staggering, especially for a State as small as mine.

Fentanyl overdose in this country has become the leading cause of death for Americans age 18 to 45. Something has to be done, and it has to be done now and fast.

This crisis on our southern border raises grave questions about the national security of our own country. In addition to the 279 individuals on the Terror Watchlist who have been encountered at the southern border since President Biden took office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has arrested over 35,000 migrants with criminal convictions in just this past year.

Nearly half of the migrants encountered on our southern border are coming from countries other than Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, or El Salvador, with more than 24,000 Chinese citizens apprehended crossing into the United States from Mexico in the past year.

Who are these people? We don't know. Yet many of them are living in all of our States.

My point is, the immigration crisis on our southern border is now more multifaceted than ever, and the open-border virtual signaling from this administration has allowed that to happen. We truly have no idea who is entering our country illegally.

At a time of heightened national security risk, this is a chance that we cannot be willing to take. There is currently a large-scale ground war in Europe, our ally and friend Israel is facing historic and unprecedented attacks of terror, and tensions in the Indo-Pacific remain on high alert.

As Leader MCCONNELL stated on this same floor yesterday, national security begins with border security. We can and should take needed action to mitigate the threats that we face. This starts by securing our southern border and making the policy changes necessary to defend our homeland from nefarious forces abroad.

I keep saying "policy changes" because there are some who think if we just keep putting money into the situation, it is going to help the problem. All the money does is turn the asylum cases around faster. It makes more people have parole into the United States, and, there, again, is a cycle of unknown people throughout the United States.

Time and again, Republicans have asked the tough questions and put forward the solutions necessary to stop the crisis that we have seen unfold. Nearly every elected official—Democrat and Republican—both in the executive branch and in Congress, has acknowledged that there are top-to-bottom changes that need to be done to our asylum system.

That is what is being offered, and that is what needs to be delivered: changes to our asylum system—meaningful changes—meaningful changes to our parole system, and safe third country agreements. This will have meaningful effect on the problems that I have described.

Now is the time to come to the table. Republicans stand for solutions that

enforce and enhance not just the immigration laws that we have on the books but the policy changes that we are advocating for.

We back our hard-working CBP agents and guards on the ground who are overwhelmed and undersupported, and we need to finish the border wall and provide the necessary level of deterrence that we desperately need.

I have been encouraged by my colleagues' bipartisan efforts for their ongoing talks to deliver the immigration policy changes that are increasingly needed, but any agreement will need to find consensus by the entire body. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to recognize the importance of the effort and of this moment.

We simply do not have time to waste. We need to come together, secure our southern border, and fulfill the other national security obligations that are demanded of a nation as powerful as ours.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, "border, border, border"—I just had lunch with Speaker MIKE JOHNSON. He is a great friend and a classmate. We came in together. That is what he said. He said he wishes he could get all of us a T-shirt that said "border, border, border."

In my office, this week, no matter what the question is, the answer is "Secure the border." In fact, I think Speaker JOHNSON has been talking to some of the same people I have been talking to.

I had the great time of my life these past 7, 10 days back home in Kansas. I got to spend time with my grandchildren, teaching them how to hunt and fish and sled in a very welcome 10-inch snow. I got to see a lot of friends and family members and share what is going on in their lives and get caught up. But no matter where I went, the No. 1 worry people had was about the concern for the safety and security of their own family.

In Kansas—the heartland, the middle of the country, the middle State—people are concerned about their own safety and security, and why wouldn't they be?

Since Joe Biden was sworn into office, over 10 million immigrants have come into our border, and over 1.5 million "got-aways" have occurred—10 million people crossing our border illegally, 1.5 million "got-aways."

This crisis at our Nation's border is the No. 1 most immediate threat to our safety and security. This is a true, clear, and present danger to our Nation.

Just think about these numbers. Fentanyl is now the No. 1 killer of young adults in America. It kills a Kansan every day. Nearly 300 young Americans are dying every day from fentanyl poisoning, not to mention what is going on with human trafficking, the growth of the cartel, and

the violence. As my dad the police officer taught me, the violence always follows the drug trafficking.

But it seems like these numbers are falling on deaf ears at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Just look at September, October, and November. These look like they are all going to be record-setting months for the number of people crossing our border illegally in these months. But yet, for some unknown reason, the White House wants to take border security off the table in the supplemental bill.

Why? That is what people are asking me back home. Why? That is the question Americans want to know.

They point out the facts that we know well up here. Under this administration, we have seen 279 known terrorists try to cross our border, more than 24,000 Chinese nationals, not to mention some 80,000 aliens of interest from countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria who have breached our border. This is indeed an invasion of our border, and every American is now paying for it.

As a matter of fact, it is now costing Americans nearly \$500 billion a year—let me say that again, \$500 billion a year—to house and take care of these illegal immigrants. Can you imagine how many Border Patrol officers, how much technology, how many drug dogs, and, yes, how much fence we could build for half a trillion dollars a year?

Again, that is what Americans are asking me back home.

It is time for this Chamber to step up to the plate and do what is right for the American people. For such a time as this, we need leadership. I am grateful, I am proud, and the American people are glad to hear that the leadership on this side of the aisle are saying we will deny cloture on this supplemental bill if there is not meaningful border security.

This concept of a supplemental bill without taking care of our national security, of sending over \$100 billion to foreign lands without addressing our own national sovereignty, well, it actually reminds me of what Abraham Lincoln once said:

You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.

Let my message today be clear. Let's bring on the hard work, late nights, and weekends. That is what Kansans do. We work hard. We have those values of a hard work ethic. I am certainly willing to do just that, to work hard to get to border security.

Look, on this side of the aisle, we are not going to waver. We are not going to quit. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure our border and to get this right for once.

I urge every Republican to vote down cloture of this outrageous supplemental package unless we see true, meaningful border security included.

We have got solutions that this body can send to the President's desk today that wouldn't cost a dime. Changing

the asylum policy alone can result in as many as 75 percent less people entering our Nation illegally—75 percent. If we just turn off the siren of asylum, we can cut back on those crossing our borders some 75 percent. That would free up the Border Patrol officers to do the job that they were hired to do: catching the bad guys, stopping the fentanyl, stopping the human trafficking, rather than playing a nursemaid to nearly 10,000 illegal people every day.

And also from a policy standpoint, we have to limit the President's abuse of his parole powers, which has enabled over 1.5 million immigrant parolees to enter our Nation under his watch.

Our insistence that these measures be included in the supplemental bill are not partisan. They are not hard-right distractions, as has been alleged. But it is an attempt to protect the lives and well-being of the Americans who elected us and their families and to ensure the sovereignty of this great Nation.

This is a national security issue, not an immigration issue. It is imperative. It is a must that any supplemental bill include provisions to address these border issues. Any package agreed upon by all or some of the Senate Republican conference must actually be effective at controlling our borders.

A measure that is advertised as stopping the torrent of illegal migration but does not in practice would be a devastating blow to the credibility of Republican Senators on this issue, over the long term, and unacceptable to the people we represent. This is why I urge every Republican in this body to vote no on cloture on any bill that does not, at a minimum, include policy changes that meaningfully address the flood of illegal immigration at our southern border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Kansas.

Coming from Texas, this is a familiar topic because we have a 1,200-mile common border with Mexico, and illegal immigration, drug smuggling, and everything that goes along with it has been something we have had to live with pretty much alone for a long time.

But now, as we have heard some people say, every State has become a border State, and every city is a border city, because what happens at the border does not stay at the border. You get migrants who ultimately make their ways to big cities like New York, Washington, DC, and Chicago.

The mayor of New York says a few thousand migrants showing up in New York will destroy New York City. Well, what about the 7 million people who have come across the southern border and then released into the interior of the United States, released at the Texas-Mexico border?

There is not a lot of empathy, not a lot of sympathy for what we have had to endure in our border communities and by the people of Texas, not to mention the billions of dollars that we have had to spend of taxpayer money, by Texans, to do the Federal Government's job. It is outrageous.

The part that is most tragic is, of course, all the lives lost to the drugs that come across the southern border. What the Biden administration does not seem to understand—or they seem to be in willful suspense of their power of disbelief—is that the 71,000 Americans who died of fentanyl overdoses last year, those drugs come from synthetic opioids made from precursors that come from China, go to Mexico, and are made into something that looks like a pharmaceutical product—relatively innocuous. But fentanyl poisoning is the leading cause of death of Americans 18 to 45 years of age.

I keep asking myself: What is it going to take? What is it going to take for the Biden administration to wake up and do something about it, to do its job? Well, obviously, 7 million migrants—that is not enough; 108,000 dead Americans—apparently that doesn't get President Biden's attention. How about the 300,000 children, the unaccompanied minors who have been placed with sponsors in the interior of the United States?

The New York Times documented that in 85,000 cases, when a call was made 30 days after the child was placed with a sponsor, there was no answer. There have been some terrible stories about forced labor and very dangerous jobs. But it doesn't take imagination to realize that what the Biden administration has done is lose basically 300,000 children. We don't know whether they are going to school. We don't know whether they are getting the healthcare they need. We don't know whether they are being trafficked for sex, forced into involuntary servitude. We don't know.

The only conclusion I can reach is that the Biden administration and the President of the United States don't care. He doesn't care because if he did care, he would do something about it.

Well, because we have been met with complete intransigence by the Biden administration and by the majority here in the Senate when it comes to solving some of these problems on a bipartisan basis—there are many of us who would be willing to work on a bill. We have worked on bills. I see the Senator from South Carolina, who bears the scars of having worked on the immigration issue many years, as have I. This is a tough, hard issue.

But enough is enough. We are not going to proceed to this emergency supplemental that the President has asked for unless and until policy changes are made to our asylum policy, the catch-and-release policies, that will stem the flow of millions of migrants across the border only to be released into the United States. It will not happen, I am confident of that.

I won't go through the statistics. Let me just mention one example. It makes no sense for migrants who come from places like Haiti to move to South America—to avoid what are admittedly dire circumstances in Haiti—only to live in South America and then, when the opportunity presents itself, to show up in Del Rio, TX, and claim asylum. They have escaped the circumstances which caused them to leave Haiti and are living in a safe third country. So why is it that under the current policies, we say: OK. If you make it to the U.S. border, we will let you in if you claim asylum.

Well, you are claiming a credible fear of persecution based on what happened to you in Haiti, not what happened to you in South America. Yet this is a huge flashing green light and a "welcome" mat for people anywhere around the world who want to make their way to our southern border.

Eagle Pass Mayor Rolando Salinas has said the city of Eagle Pass has lost at least \$500,000 during the closure of a bridge due to the influx of migrants.

One of the things we did during President Trump's tenure in office, which I think was one of the most significant, was we passed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement in recognition of the fact that our economies in North America are intertwined and that millions of American jobs depend on that flow of legitimate trade and commerce across our international bridges.

But, again, one of the other consequences of President Biden's border crisis is that even the benefits of that trade and legitimate commerce are being denied because resources at our bridges and ports of entry are being overwhelmed.

I mentioned New York City. Last year, more than 130,000 migrants arrived in New York City. That city spent \$2 billion to manage the crisis. That is a drop in the bucket compared to what the State of Texas has had to do over recent years. But it is no surprise that the mayor and others in New York have taken notice. I think that is the point.

Governor Abbott knew that if the Biden administration was going to ignore the plight of border States like Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, that maybe he would care if these migrants showed up in New York City.

Now, polls have shown that New Yorkers are overwhelmingly concerned about the influx of migrants in their State and in their city. Eighty-two percent said it was a serious problem.

So why doesn't President Biden—maybe he doesn't care about a red State like Texas, but he should care about a blue State. The truth is, he should care about the entire United States, but let's just maybe question why he would ignore the pleas of Mayor Adams and the voters in New York State—a State that probably was responsible for his margin of victory in

the last Presidential election. Well, he continues to ignore it.

In fact, the Senate majority leader, from New York, where Mayor Adams is mayor—a major capital city there—despite the fact that Senator SCHUMER represents that same State, he has criticized the Republican effort to actually address the Biden border crisis. He has called it partisan and hard right.

Well, frankly, that is all the majority leader and our Democratic colleagues have been willing to do. But we are not going to miss this opportunity to get true policy changes which help stem the flow of illegal migration across the border.

It is clear that the President and Secretary Mayorkas, who has been an absolute, unmitigated disaster as Secretary of Homeland Security—I told him at the last hearing we had: I have lost confidence, any confidence, in your willingness to do your job. You should resign.

Well, he continues to show up and testify under oath and to lie when he says the border is secure. Well, anybody with eyes in their head can tell that that is not true. And he has told the Border Patrol: Don't actually tell anybody what is happening at the border.

Well, enough is enough. We are not going anywhere on this supplemental appropriations bill until and unless acceptable provisions are made to change the policies that currently implement the Biden border crisis and to staunch the flow of drugs and people across the border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I just want to pick up where Senator CORNYN left off. He has been a great person to try to work with to find a solution to our immigration problems.

But what we are dealing with on the Senate floor is not an immigration issue.

To my Democratic colleagues: I have worked with many of you on solutions to immigration, comprehensive immigration reform.

We are now having to deal with a broken border from a national security lens—172 encounters that we know of, of people on the Terrorist Watchlist. In fiscal year 2021, it was 15. So it is going through the roof.

So we have to get control of our border for our own national security sake. Terrorism is on the rise. The world is on fire. Now is not the time to have a broken border.

The numbers are really astounding. In September, we had the highest encounters at the border in recorded history. In December of 2020, we had the lowest in decades. In fiscal year 2023, which ended September 30, 2.5 million people. Since President Biden has been in office, 6 million people. That is larger than the State of South Carolina.

So one of two things is going on regarding the border. The Biden adminis-

tration wants it to be this way for some reason or they are incompetent. If they are incompetent, they need to listen to people who have actually tried to secure the border successfully and work with us to get it done. If they want it to be this way, it is going to end if you want money for other countries.

I have been involved in about every game there is on immigration reform, but I am here to tell my Democratic colleagues: I am not going back to South Carolina and say I provided money for Ukraine and Israel, which I desperately support, unless we fix in a real way the problems at our border. That is unsustainable for me.

The Speaker of the House was just addressing the Republican Senate. I think he understands the need for Ukraine funding, but he says border security has to be real for the House Republicans to be able to do what they need to do.

To my Democratic colleagues: You are fighting us in a way that makes no sense to me. I understand why we should send money to Ukraine. You had me at hello. I understand why we need to help our friends in Israel. I don't understand why you fight the changes that would bring back order out of chaos.

Is that the position of the Democratic Party, that the policies that led to this overwhelming surge in illegal immigration are not subject to change?

We are not going to vote for legislation that doesn't stop what is on this chart, period. Look at the line. Fiscal year 2020, 458,000 encounters; fiscal year 2023, 2.5 million. It has to stop.

Look at the asylum system that is being completely gamed. It has become a joke. It needs to stop.

Parole. We have had some major efforts to reform asylum. Senator LANKFORD is doing a good job.

To my good friend Senator BENNET, I want money for Ukraine. I support Ukraine funding. I think a lot of Republicans do. But we have to have real reform on the border. And your statement that Ukrainian aid should be separate and apart from the border is not going to happen.

Parole is meant to be a case-by-case analysis based on two things: There is an urgent humanitarian reason for the person to come in under parole or a significant public benefit—any alien applying for admission to the United States. That is the law that is being abused.

Past administrations granted parole in a handful of cases. There had to be an urgent humanitarian reason or the individual in question had to provide a significant public benefit. The Biden administration is using the parole statute to allow people in by the hundreds of thousands without any individual analysis, in my view.

So all I am asking to do is follow the law. Quit using the parole statute to allow hundreds of thousands of people in, in violation of the law. If we went

back to what the law says, most of this would stop.

Secretary Mayorkas, here is what he said to Senator LANKFORD:

We need . . . the ability to remove individuals who [do] not qualify [for asylum] . . . with efficiency and speed.

Why are so many people coming? Word is out that if you get into America, you ask for asylum, you never leave. We release you into the interior of the country, years pass before your asylum claim is heard, and you are here in America, and you never leave.

We have to change the asylum laws so that you actually have to apply to the first safe third country you pass through, not just here in America. And we should not release you until your claim has at least been adjudicated at the initial stages. And 90 percent of the asylum claims are eventually denied; so, clearly, the screening system needs to change.

So long story short, we are not going to pass a supplemental that doesn't have policy changes to dramatically stem the flow at the border. This is not an immigration negotiation. There is not going to be a DREAM Act provision attached to this. This is about locking the border down in a fashion to give the public confidence that as a nation, we have the ability to secure our own border.

To all of my friends on the other side—and on this side—who have negotiated immigration reform in the past, President Biden's irresponsible handling of the U.S.-Mexican border has made it virtually impossible to do an immigration deal any time soon. No Republican in their right mind would vote for a comprehensive immigration bill until the Democratic Party can prove that they are capable of securing the border.

Everything we worked for all these years has been lost. Your approach to the border during the last 3 years has made it impossible to do immigration reform until we first secure the border, not as part of an overall effort to deal with immigration, but you need to prove to us and the people of the United States you can and will secure our border. Until you do that, no deal.

How this ends, I don't know. I just know this: I am OK with aid to Ukraine. I am more than OK with aid to Israel. I am insisting on border security that is meaningful. I am not asking for H.R. 2. I am not asking for everything I would do to secure the border if I were King of the country. But I have been around this issue enough to know what works and what doesn't. The policy changes we are insisting upon regarding asylum and parole need to be implemented to regain control of our border. And that is not too much to ask.

I look forward to working with our colleagues on the other side—and you—to find a way to help Israel, who are in dire straits, find a way to keep Putin from going past Ukraine, bring some sanity back to the world. But you are

going to have to work with us. And we are not looking for half measures. We are smart enough on our side to know what works. And I am not into doing a deal that doesn't work.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I appreciate the words of my colleague from South Carolina. I fully support everything he said. And I want to come up and speak again to the challenge that we have at the border and why we need to take action now and why that action needs to be taken as part of a supplemental that includes funding for Israel and Ukraine.

The situation at the border simply has gotten out of control. But I think it bears repeating; it has been said by some of the folks who spoke before: We are talking about a fourfold increase.

Donald Trump was President for 4 years. President Biden has been President for 3 years. And in 3 years, we have nearly four times the crossings that we did in the Trump administration.

Now, let's say some of that is because we had title 42 and COVID. That is fine. We can argue that. But we can still recognize this is a two- or three-time increase in illegal crossings.

Now, we have lost operational control of the border. We don't have situational awareness at the border.

Let me explain what that means. When you have 1.5 million people who we know came into this country illegally—they paid money to a cartel—\$5 to \$50,000, depending upon what country they came from—to get into this country illegally. But some of them specifically want to go through a sector that the cartels specialize in making sure that you never have to encounter a border agent. They are called "got-aways." Over the last 3 years, 1.5 million "got-aways" have entered this country.

Now, I have been to the border several times. Once you cross the Rio Grande River, most people are going to go present themselves to a Border Patrol agent, and then you are going to be processed. You are either going to get screened for asylum or you are going to get paroled. But from the time you cross the border until the time you are released into the United States, it is a matter of days or a week. So why would somebody spend money—why would 1.5 million people spend money to expressly avoid being detained, unless they have a bad record, unless they have criminal intent or malign intent?

Ladies and gentlemen, we have apprehended people at the border who are on the Terrorist Watchlist. So we have lost operational control of the border by a fourfold increase in crossings. We have lost situational awareness because we don't know where these 1.5 million people are. We only know that they set foot on American soil, and it is highly unlikely that they went back.

Now, I hate to almost draw this parallel, but I think it is important. One

of the things when Israel is able to be successful in their response to Hamas, Israel is going to have to go back and say: How did this even happen on October 7?

Well, we know. And I think a part of that analysis is going to be that they had lost situational awareness on the threat coming from Gaza. Now, people may say it is an unfair comparison. I don't think it is. When we have almost 8 million people by the end of this administration here illegally, is it fair to say that a few of them hate America, that they could be terrorists, and they are on the Terrorist Watchlist? There is a compelling Homeland Security reason for securing the border.

And the American people are great. I want to get quickly to the negotiations that are being led by JAMES LANKFORD. The American people now, a majority—we are not talking a plurality; we are talking about a majority of American people—Democrats, Independents, Republicans—agree that we have a major problem or crisis at the border. Biden needs to fix this problem. Biden needs to fix this problem for Senators that are running up.

This is not a situation where it is just Republicans saying we want a secure border. We always do; we always will. This is now the American people in the electorate saying that we need to fix it.

So when we get into negotiations, of course, we have to change asylum policy and, of course, we have to change parole policy. And, of course, that is going to make some Democrats get out of their comfort zone.

The last thing I will leave you with, in the last Congress, ladies and gentlemen, I participated in every single bipartisan bill that was passed out of the Congress in the last Congress. I took a lot of heat from the right for doing that. And I did it for good reason.

Now, the Democrats can say that they had a bipartisan vote in the last Congress, but they didn't. All 51 of them voted for something I worked hard to get 11 or 12 or 15 Republicans to vote on. So now it is time for Democrats to demonstrate their commitment to bipartisanship. It is time to let some of their Members get out of their comfort zone or vote no on the supplemental, while the other ones who recognize this is a problem and that the American people have disapproved of this administration's handling of it, now it is their time to be bipartisan. Now it is their time to recognize that parole reform and asylum reform is critical to reducing the future flows.

And I hope that my colleagues will, because as someone who has tried to be bipartisan and respectful of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have no intention of supporting a supplemental bill that doesn't have meaningful bipartisan border security that we can measure on an almost immediate basis in terms of reducing the future flows.

I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who I thor-

oughly enjoyed working with on bipartisan efforts in the last Congress, will see that this is an opportunity, this is their time to demonstrate the same courage, to get out of their comfort zone and do what is right for the American people.

I yield floor.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 5 minutes and, also, that Senator MENENDEZ be allowed to speak for 5 minutes as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I want to echo the comments of both the esteemed Senator from South Carolina as well as the Senator from North Carolina. And I rise to address the same subject, and that is, to bring attention to the crisis that is taking place at our southern border.

You know, the cause of the crisis is very clear, and the numbers do not lie. In fiscal year 2022, Customs and Border Protection—CBP—encountered nearly 2.4 million illegal crossings at the southern border. In fiscal year 2023, the number of encounters rose to nearly 2.5 million—2.5 million.

Now, since the start of fiscal 2024—that's what, just the first month—there have been over 240,000 illegal crossings at our southern border.

Put differently, this means that after just over a month—end of the fiscal year, this fiscal year 2024—nearly a quarter of a million people have tried to illegally enter the United States via the southern border.

And these are just the individuals that we know about. Reporting shows that since the start of fiscal 2024, there have been more than 23,000 known "got-aways." Since the beginning of the Biden administration, there have been 1.7 million "got-aways."

Additionally, CBP has confirmed that a dozen individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist have attempted to illegally enter the United States through the southern border already this fiscal year, in just 1 month. And look what is going on in the world right now. And we have people on the Terrorist Watchlist trying to cross our border.

The American people can see the problem, even if the Biden administration can't or, worse, just continues to choose to ignore it.

This crisis is the result of the Biden administration's failure to secure our border—pure and simple. It is not an issue of not having comprehensive immigration reform. It is a failure of the administration to enforce the law.

The open border policies of the Biden administration jeopardize our national security because border security is national security.

I want to repeat that. And I will repeat it again.

Border security is national security. And Americans know it.

The situation at the southern border has turned every State into a border State.

Last month, I was in Jamestown, ND, to stand with the 817th Engineer Company of the North Dakota National Guard as they prepared to deploy for a yearlong mission to assist CBP in securing our southern border.

So now we have the National Guard down there trying to secure the border. But, again, they can't get the job done if they aren't given the enforcement authority to do it.

DHS writ large, as well as any other support down there, has to be given the authority to enforce the law. And the administration will not do it because the administration wants an open border policy.

As we continue to debate the upcoming supplemental appropriations package, we must include real, enforceable steps to secure our border. This should include benchmarks so we know the administration is enforcing the law and reducing the number of encounters and illegal entries.

The administration's current policies prioritize processing migrants who illegally come across the southern border and then providing them with housing, transportation, and other services once they enter the United States.

The administration is turning CBP into one of the most well-funded, government-run travel agencies in the world. Any supplemental funding must secure our border—our own border. That means ensuring that the administration reinstates the Migrant Protection Protocols—or the “Remain in Mexico” policy; enforces third safe country agreements; and resumes construction of the border wall.

Those things are all in place now. It doesn't require legislation from Congress. Those are measures that are in law now. The administration refuses to enforce them because the administration wants an open border policy.

And we need to include benchmarks to hold the administration's feet to the fire and ensure that these policies get enforced.

The Biden administration must address the border crisis, enforce the laws that kept monthly encounters to lower numbers under the prior administration—we are not guessing about this; we saw that it works under the prior administration—and take border security seriously, because, again, border security is national security.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that my remarks be completed prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JAMEL SEMPER

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to proudly vote for the confirmation of Jamel Semper to the U.S. District Court of New Jersey.

Mr. Semper, whom I personally recommended to President Biden, is exceptionally well-qualified for this position, and you don't have to take my

word for it. Mr. Semper received strong, bipartisan support on the Judiciary Committee. So there is no reason he shouldn't enjoy that same bipartisan support here on the Senate floor.

For more than 15 years, Mr. Semper has tirelessly sought justice for the residents who call New Jersey home. Indeed, it is the central theme that runs throughout Mr. Semper's career—an unwavering commitment to the rule of law and to the communities the law is meant to protect.

He began his career as an assistant prosecutor in Union County, handling a wide range of cases across the appellate, juvenile, and adult trial units. Then, in Essex County, he went after carjackers and murderers, including the first prosecution of a homicide under New Jersey's domestic terrorism statute.

In 2018, he was sworn in as an assistant U.S. attorney in Newark, climbing the ladder and ultimately serving as chief of both the violent crime and organized crime units. Today, he is the deputy chief of the criminal division, a role in which he is responsible for supervising all phases of criminal investigation and prosecution.

In each of these positions, Mr. Semper has demonstrated unflinching fidelity to the rule of law. Time and time again, Mr. Semper has kept New Jerseyans safe, while also building bridges between residents and those who have sworn an oath to protect them.

This community-focused approach to law enforcement has earned Mr. Semper plaudits from individuals and organizations representing diverse interests, especially those who advocate for communities of color in the Garden State.

Consider the words of Rev. Ron Slaughter, the pastor of St. James AME in Newark. He said:

“Semper has touched all the bases, stayed connected to the community, and remained patient. This is a great day for New Jersey, America, our judiciary, and my community.”

Truer words haven't been spoken.

Mr. Semper's confirmation today not only furthers our collective goal of addressing judicial vacancies across our country; it also advances our efforts to diversify the Federal bench. It brings us one step closer toward ensuring that our most hallowed institutions reflect the rich tapestry of America.

For nearly 18 years, I have always taken my constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on judicial nominees seriously. It is one of the most solemn obligations as U.S. Senators that we have, and it is one of the most consequential impacts we have on our democracy as Senators—confirming judges who interpret and shape the law and our Constitution for decades to come.

So I am a firm believer that our independent judiciary must reflect the very best of America's values and its citizens, which is why I can honestly say

that Jamel Semper's relentless commitment to public service, combined with his temperament and the trust he has built with New Jerseyans—all this is exactly what we look for in a Federal judge.

He will, no doubt, be an asset to New Jersey's Federal bench, and I encourage all my colleagues to support Jamel Semper to be in his rightful place on the District Court of New Jersey.

IMMIGRATION

Madam President, before I yield the floor, I would like to take a moment to forcefully oppose ongoing efforts to attach harmful immigration proposals to the national security supplemental package we are considering. It is the height of absurdity to claim that the price for assisting our international allies is gutting our asylum and humanitarian parole laws.

Democrats should not and cannot stand idly by while asylum seekers and immigrant families are imperiled by a handful of Senators operating in total darkness, without any meaningful feedback from a broader coalition of Hispanic, Black, and Asian legislators, advocates, and others who should be helping shape these negotiations.

For all those who care about the future of immigrants in this country—indeed, our very identity as a beacon of hope for those seeking a better life—now is the time to make your voice heard. Now is the time to make it clear that we will not allow our asylum and humanitarian parole laws to be gutted, while undocumented immigrants, including Dreamers, TPS recipients, farm workers, and essential workers are forced to stay in the shadows. Now is the time to make it clear that we will not stand by as some try to fundamentally change our immigration system without any transparent, deliberative process. This is the time to make it clear that we should not be codifying asylum and transit bans into law—failed policies that will do nothing to mitigate the flow of migration to the United States.

Moreover, now is the time for my Democratic colleagues in both the Senate and the House to meet the moment. This is our clarion call. We must find the moral courage to do what is right. Otherwise, what are we doing here? How are we supposed to face our constituents and immigrant families across the Nation, some of whom are doing the most difficult jobs in our country in order to help us, and argue that we are the party that stands with immigrants? We cannot capitulate to the extremes in the Republican Party that are more interested in demonizing and hurting immigrants than working together in good faith to fix our immigration system.

We must reject the notion that playing our role as the defender of freedom and democracy around the world comes at the cost of our own identity as a nation of immigrants. We are the United States of America. Let's ultimately start acting like that.

NOMINATION OF MICAH W.J. SMITH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Micah Smith to the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii.

Mr. Smith attended Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Law School before completing two prestigious clerkships—first, for Judge Guido Calabresi on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and, later, for Justice David Souter on the U.S. Supreme Court.

He then entered private practice and focused on complex civil litigation, including intellectual property, labor law, product liability, and the False Claims Act. In 2012, Mr. Smith joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York as an assistant U.S. attorney in the office's criminal division. As a line prosecutor, he handled cases including racketeering, murder-for-hire, drug trafficking, tax fraud, and money laundering. For 2 years, he also supervised 20 line prosecutors in the office's violent and organized crime unit. Mr. Smith is now a Federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Hawaii and currently serves as the deputy chief of the office's criminal division, as the criminal civil rights coordinator, and as the chief of appeals and legal strategy. Throughout the course of his career, he has tried 10 cases to verdict.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Mr. Smith "well qualified" to serve on the district court. Senators SCHATZ and HIRONO recommended him to the White House and strongly support his nomination.

Mr. Smith is a seasoned practitioner with significant litigation experience in federal court, and he will be an asset to the District of Hawaii. I will be supporting this outstanding nominee, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SMITH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Smith nomination?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 320 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rounds
Booker	Kelly	Sanders
Brown	Kennedy	Schatz
Butler	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Mullin	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Graham	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Fischer	Ricketts
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Schmitt
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tuberville
Cramer	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz
Hickenlooper

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 378, Jamel Semper, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, Jeanne Shaheen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz, John W. Hickenlooper, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jamel Semper, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 321 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Butler	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lummis	Thune
Cotton	Marshall	Tillis
Cramer	McConnell	Tuberville
Crapo	Moran	Vance
Daines	Mullin	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Ricketts	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz
Hickenlooper

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jamel Semper, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

CHILDCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, as you well know, because we have talked about it, our childcare system is simply broken. It is not working for families across our country, and we face a crisis now that continues to grow worse.

I have said that many times—many times—and I will say it again and again and again until we fix this broken system for good. And I am not the only one here in Congress who feels that way. Earlier this month, 48 of my Senate colleagues sent a letter to me and Vice Chair COLLINS, Leader SCHUMER, and Leader MCCONNELL urging us to include childcare funding in any emergency supplemental.

Today, many of them are joining me here on the Senate floor to lift up the

concerns that we are hearing from parents and making the case for providing robust childcare funding without delay.

We cannot pretend that childcare is any less urgent than the other challenges that we face. For every parent, childcare is a do-it-now problem, not a do-it-later problem. We need to treat it the same way here: urgent and essential.

Parents can't wait. They have to go to work tomorrow. They need accessible options now. Childcare workers cannot wait. They have to pay rent this month. They have to put food on their table tonight. They need a salary that lets them take care of their own families and that lets them keep doing what they love, instead of taking higher pay in retail or food services to keep their families afloat.

Providers can't wait. Their margins are already razor thin. If they don't get the support they need to cover operating costs until after they have raised prices and cut off families, after workers have already left, or after they are forced to close their doors, well, it is too late.

The writing on the wall is right now in big, bold letters. The childcare crisis is only going to get worse unless we take action and soon.

Childcare providers across the country are hanging on by a thread, especially now that our stabilization funding has expired, cutting off the lifeline that helped 220,000 providers stay open and helped provide childcare to nearly 10 million kids, while raising wages for childcare workers and lowering prices for working families.

If childcare centers don't get the support they need to make ends meet, the options for children and families is not pretty. We are talking about a very real possibility that childcare centers have to reduce the pay for their staff, lay off staff, serve fewer kids and families, raise their prices, or, in many cases, just simply shut their door.

This is a huge problem for working parents who can scarcely find childcare as it is. And even if they can find openings, that doesn't mean they can afford them. In fact, the already high cost of childcare is only getting worse. The latest data shows that in September, childcare prices jumped by the largest percent in a year. That means parents—especially moms—are feeling the crunch, and far too many are going to be forced to leave their job or unable to return to the workforce because it just doesn't square with their family finances.

Back in my home State, I have heard so many stories of families who are struggling with this. I just read a story about two parents, Lara and Rob. Rob had to leave his company to get a more flexible schedule because childcare was too expensive. So he and Lara have to trade off shifts and work fewer hours to make sure someone is watching the kids. And they are far from the only ones struggling with this.

The KUOW article featuring their story this week also mentioned a

woman named Monica—she is a therapist and former childcare worker who trades off working and watching the kids with her husband who is a police officer—and Skye, who is also trading off shifts with her husband since their childcare provider closed.

As she put it, "I definitely can't pay for soccer and my mortgage and some child care. I have to pick. So we've chosen soccer and mortgage and putting together this bizarre schedule where my husband is exhausted all the time and we barely see each other."

That is what parents are going through across Washington State and across our entire country. It is hurting everyone. You can draw a straight line from the expiration of the childcare stabilization funds at the end of September to the painful closure of childcare providers, to the subsequent scramble now by parents to find new and likely more expensive childcare for their kids, that is squeezing parents out of hours on the job, if not out of the workforce entirely, right to the employers who are left without the workers they need because you better believe it is going to have an impact on their bottom line.

Failing to shore up our childcare industry that holds up nearly every sector of our economy in the midst of a workforce shortage that is hitting small businesses and big firms alike will cost us a lot more than the investment in childcare we are asking for. We are going to lose jobs; we are going to lose workers; and our economy is going to continue to lose billions more in lost wages and revenue and growth.

We are talking a serious meltdown that costs our economy big if we fail to value our families and invest in the people parents need to watch over their kids.

There is no reason for this, not if we take action and take it soon.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, we cannot ignore childcare. This is hugely important for our national economy. It is one of the biggest line items on family budgets in many States, including my home State of Washington. Childcare now costs more than college tuition. We have to continue to stabilize the childcare system instead of standing by and letting things get worse and worse and worse.

Families get this, all of my colleagues on the floor with me today get this, and thankfully President Biden does as well. The President sent Congress a request for supplemental funding for urgent domestic priorities, and childcare was at the top of that list.

Now I am calling on all of our colleagues on both sides of this aisle to work with us to pass a package that funds critical needs at home, especially childcare.

I think everyone understands there is a lot happening in the world today. That is why we absolutely need to pass supplemental funding to meet our urgent national security challenges and soon, but as we continue to work to do

that, we also have to tackle the problems families face here at home, and that means addressing the growing childcare crisis.

We are the United States of America. We can stand with our allies around the world and tackle the challenges we face with our families here at home. If we are serious about the strength of this Nation, our communities, and our families, we have got to respond to the domestic challenges with the same resolve as we do with the national security challenges.

I am going to continue to work hard with everyone to do that, and I appreciate everybody's support and all of my colleagues who are here today to speak out on this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I rise with my colleagues today to say that childcare is a necessity for working families, and it is in all of our interests to make sure that families have a safe, affordable, high-quality place for their little ones. And that is why we need to step up and make sure that we provide support for childcare as we contemplate next steps for an emergency supplemental budget.

So for decades, Minnesotans have struggled to find childcare they can afford. Even before the pandemic, families told me that it cost them as much to pay for a year of daycare as to send their child to the University of Minnesota for a year.

I mean, of course, these young families haven't had years to save to pay for that childcare. So they can't afford over \$12,000 a year, and that is even if they can find a good, safe place for their infants and toddlers.

Then, of course, when the pandemic hit, family care providers came into my office to tell me that their businesses were about to collapse. And then what happened? Congress took crucial action. We came together to pass emergency relief so that providers could pay their bills and keep their doors open, and families had a place for their children. These relief programs were absolutely necessary to help childcare providers keep their doors open and to operate during those unprecedented times.

So here is the good news. Our efforts were a huge success. Minnesota providers, from the smallest of small businesses operating out of their homes to larger childcare centers, all tell me that they would not have survived without this help, and that is true not just in Minnesota but all over the country.

Just in Minnesota, the emergency childcare stabilization grants kept over 8,000 childcare providers going. It kept them going. They reached over 200,000 kids just in Minnesota, but also in every State. From Alaska to Alabama, every State saw really tremendous benefits. In fact—this is interesting—96 percent of childcare providers that got

help from these stabilization grants say that it helped them to stay open and operating.

So, colleagues, here is our challenge. On September 30, these programs expired, but the deep challenges that families and childcare providers face are still there. So we are back in the soup because, without help to these providers, they are back at risk themselves, and they face really terrible choices, as Senator MURRAY just described. Do they try to cut the pay for these workers, who are some of the lowest paid, underpaid workers—primarily women, primarily women of color—anyplace in the country. So that is one option—pay cuts for those workers who are struggling already themselves. Or do they try to increase prices, which we know will drive some families away because they literally cannot afford what it costs? Or, as Senator MURRAY says, do they just fold up? Do they just go out of business? Do they give up?

And if that happens, we know what we will see. We will see more women leaving the workforce at a time when many Minnesota businesses are telling me that they are struggling to find the talent that they need to grow their businesses.

So, colleagues, we took decisive action to bolster our Nation's caregiving infrastructure, and we got great results. And, now, we cannot afford to lose the progress that we made.

This is an issue that I think we all know people are paying attention to. In Minnesota and all over the country, they are noticing this. Childcare is one of the top issues that I hear about from people when I am home. I hear it from families in rural Minnesota who are driving 50 miles to take their kids to childcare. I hear it from families who are paying more than a third of their incomes to cover the costs of care for two children, and I hear it from employers and economic development professionals who want to hire and retain great talent, but they know that they can't do that unless there is a childcare center in their community that people can rely on.

So this is about our kids, but it is also about our economy. A recent study found that our broken childcare system cost the economy \$122 billion a year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. That is every year—\$122 billion.

So if you think about the return on investment for providing the grants to stabilize these childcare centers so that they are there for our families, it is so clear what the right thing to do is.

We can fix this. We know what to do because we did it once and it worked, and now we just need to do it again.

Now, I think that everyone in this room knows that we need a long-term solution to our childcare crisis, and many of us are working on that. But, in the meantime, right now, families don't have time to wait. We know what

to do. We know how to help parents. We know how to keep childcare providers open.

And so I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Let's take what we know worked, and let's do it again. Join us in providing urgently needed support for childcare. Join us for the good of our families, for the good of our babies and toddlers, and for childcare providers and for our whole country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I am here to join my colleagues because, across the country, working families are facing an impossible choice that is created by the lack of access to childcare.

Even before the COVID pandemic, families in my home State of New Hampshire and elsewhere have struggled to access affordable childcare, and they were often faced with shortages of available childcare slots. The pandemic exacerbated these challenges and caused childcare centers across the Granite State to close. That forced countless families to scramble for alternatives.

The closure of a childcare provider can result in higher costs for families, and in New England, we already pay some of the highest costs for childcare in the country. They can also require parents to leave the workforce altogether.

Since 2019, New Hampshire has lost nearly 1,500 childcare slots, as dozens of childcare centers have closed their doors. I have visited some of those centers from across my State—from Littleton, in the northern part of New Hampshire, to Rochester, down on the Maine border, to Manchester, our largest city, and over in the west to Keene. I have seen those closed classrooms and strained facilities in every corner of the Granite State.

In October of 2020, New Hampshire had only half of the licensed capacity necessary to serve children under the age of 6 who needed care—only half of the required slots for care. And in just one of our counties, Coos County, which is the northernmost county of the State and borders Canada, three childcare centers have closed since January of this year.

Like all of my colleagues on the floor, we worked to deliver more than \$50 billion in Federal funding for childcare during the pandemic. This is funding that was critical for allowing providers to keep their doors open, to improve childcare affordability and expand access, to increase wages for childcare workers, and to build a supply of childcare in States like New Hampshire. Now, with that relief funding running out, childcare providers are again facing an existential crisis.

Congress intentionally designed childcare relief during the pandemic to accomplish two goals: first, to provide direct relief to providers to stabilize the sector; and, second, to provide

States with the resources to make long-term investments to try and address childcare availability.

Now, I am disappointed to say that in my State of New Hampshire, they delayed the distribution of that long-term funding stream, which made the last 2 years unnecessarily burdensome for families and childcare providers across New Hampshire. In fact, I am hearing from providers who are in desperate need of additional support to avoid closing classrooms.

So I am really pleased that the President included \$16 billion for support for childcare in his domestic supplemental appropriations request to Congress, and we need to act as soon as possible to provide this critical funding.

We have got to act to stabilize not just the childcare industry that our families and workforce and communities rely on, but this is vital for our economy as a whole. Right now, the repercussions of the childcare crisis are being felt across every sector of our economy. I have heard from every industry in New Hampshire—manufacturing, healthcare, nonprofits, tourism—that the childcare crisis has hamstrung their ability to continue to grow their operations.

Over the summer, I traveled up to Coos County, that northernmost county of New Hampshire. I heard from parents and from one family, and a man named Michael, whose son's childcare center has recently closed. At the time of the closure, the nearest center with any open slots for him and his wife to be able to place their son was more than an hour away. That left Michael and his wife, like many families across the State, struggling to do their best to keep their jobs without local, reliable childcare. And where they live, their community can't afford for Michael or his wife, who is a critical healthcare worker, to leave the workforce.

New Hampshire's families should not have to choose between their children and their jobs, and New Hampshire's businesses should not have to face additional struggles to find qualified workers.

Families across America are relying on us—all of us here in Congress—to help childcare providers stay open and to provide affordable care options. This Federal funding would improve their lives while boosting our economy by helping parents keep their jobs or return to work.

I appreciate all of those who are here on the floor today, and everyone who is supporting additional funding, for speaking out to make sure that we try and do something as soon as possible to help the families who are in need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am delighted to join my colleagues today from the Finance Committee. Our chairman is here. We did, I think, remarkable work to expand the

child tax credit during the COVID epidemic, and it made a truly remarkable difference in children's lives—nearly 50 percent reduction in child poverty. Why would you not want more of that? Yet we let it expire in 2021, and, sure enough, child poverty climbed back up again.

There was a lot of fearmongering, when we did it, that this was going to discourage people from working, that they would sit at home and sop up the tax credit. But the fact of the matter is, if you can't get childcare, you can't get to work. And if you can't get reliable, quality childcare, you can't move up into the kind of job where you don't have to worry about being called away because your childcare just fell apart.

So in Rhode Island at least, we saw families do more work as a result of this, and 174,000 Rhode Island children benefited. Families got \$264 million—low-income families—to pay for childcare, get to work, or step up to a better job.

At the same time, we also provided additional funding for childcare providers in that same American rescue plan, and that was another win. And you put the two together, and it really lifted families.

Right now, without Congressional action, 3 million children are projected to lose access to childcare, and 70,000 childcare programs could close.

Bring that to Rhode Island, and it is 21,000 kids in my State who could lose access to childcare, 680 childcare workers could lose their jobs, and 419 different childcare providers could close.

We simply cannot let that happen. It is wrong. It is dumb. It is penny-wise and pound-foolish.

We need to do three simple things: Make childcare a priority, encourage work and earning, and reduce child poverty. We can do those three things by reestablishing the child tax credit and continuing to support childcare providers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I will start by thanking my colleagues, especially Senator MURRAY, for organizing this effort and also for her life of being a passionate advocate for kids, especially as an early childhood educator.

And I will start in another way that is a little nontraditional and just be a proud dad. I have three adult children, and I am proud of them all for different reasons. But my middle son, I am proud of him because he is my only Phi Beta Kappa, and he also is an early childhood educator. He decided that working as a childcare provider is what he wants to do, and he has worked in both pre-K classroom settings and also individually for families.

I know how little he makes, 10 years out of college. I know how he loves to find some extra hours where he can make a little bit more. I was excited that he was excited, a few years ago, when he told me that he had picked up extra hours shoveling snow at the pre-

K classroom. Because he lives in Minnesota, there is a lot of snow to be shoveled. So on nights or on weekends when there is snow, he is going to make a little bit more by being the snow shoveler, so that kids, parents, and teachers can come safely to school that day.

The stories that I hear traveling around Virginia are the same that my colleagues have shared, but I just want to share two, one from a parent and one from a provider.

Heather is in Fairfax City, in the most populous part of Virginia. Here is what she told us:

One of the reasons my family ended up homeless was because we didn't have access to quality, affordable childcare for our boys when they were little. They also lost access to programs that would allow them to be school-ready.

When I was pregnant with our twins, I was hospitalized for almost 12 weeks, and we couldn't afford childcare for our boys, so my husband would drop them off at the hospital so that he would be able to go to work.

Unfortunately, without access to child care and a hospital being no place for kids to stay all day long, he ended up losing his job, which in turn meant we lost money to provide for ourselves. We had to go on SNAP to have food, and eventually, he lost his business, and we became homeless. . . . One of the biggest contributing factors was the lack of access to affordable child care.

At the time there was not enough space in programs like Head Start. Without access to affordable, quality child care, families are hurting. The lack of access to this vital service has forced families to not be able to go to work, go to school, or even leave kids at home in compromising positions just to be able to put food on the table.

I forgot to include that at this time, we were considered middle class before all this; both my husband and I are college educated. I was working at first, too, but also had to leave my job because we couldn't afford the child care for both of us to work. And my husband is an honorably discharged combat veteran. I meant to add this to help demonstrate how far-reaching this is and to break down myths about who this affects.

Quickly, at the other end of my State in Appalachia, Kristi, the owner of a childcare center in Blacksburg:

Since the pandemic, we have had to decrease the number of families that we were able to serve because we are having such a difficult time with our staffing. Being able to pay early childhood teachers has always been a significant difficulty for us, but since the pandemic, it has [become] tremendous. . . . I think what the Senate needs to understand is that if this industry collapses, and I would say we are very much on the verge of a major collapse, it is going to have a detrimental impact on the workforce [and our economy].

That is why we have to act to restore the childcare funding that created breathing room for our providers and our families, and I stand together with my colleagues to do all we can to support President Biden's request that we have \$16 billion in childcare funding at this most critical time.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, my colleagues have said it so well. Very

briefly, I want to thank Senator MURRAY and all my colleagues who have done such good work.

Let me start by saying that we Democrats are generally not supposed to use the words "supply-side economics." I want everybody to understand we have to be supply-siders on childcare. We desperately need more childcare facilities. We need more built. And I have no qualms about saying as a proud Democrat and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee I am a supply-sider on the issue of childcare.

I will say that everywhere I go in my State, big communities and small communities, there are waiting lines, very long waiting lines, for childcare. It is absolutely unacceptable.

We have to increase our supply. We passed a number of good pieces of legislation. We have more to do.

Point No. 2 is this is a fundamental issue of American productivity. We know that we are trying to compete in tough global markets. The President of the Senate, in my part of the world, California, Oregon, and the West, we have a geographical advantage, a leg up on China. Let's not give it away with the absence of good childcare facilities.

You have to have childcare in order to be able to get to work and know that your kid is going to be OK while you are gone making a living.

Finally, the third point that I would make is that we need to tap all the resources that are available in our communities—all of them. Child care centers, in-home child care, and we should also be thinking of how to partner with churches.

This isn't a red or blue issue. It's not a rural or urban issue. It's an everyone issue. So our committees, working together, can do this. But we ought to utilize all our resources.

I am going to make this a filibuster-free zone. My colleagues have all said it, you know, really well. Supply-side economics for getting us more childcare facilities. Let's focus on this as a productivity issue, a competitiveness issue. Third, let's utilize all the resources in our communities.

I congratulate all my colleagues, and it is great to see the Finance Committee stalwarts out in force.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I am so glad to join my colleagues on the floor today to really emphasize how a family's life falls apart when they don't have access to good childcare.

I am one of a handful of parents of young kids. I have no complaints. Obviously, my wife and I make enough money so that we have been able to provide quality childcare for our kids, as we have both been working throughout their lives. But when you are living on a more modest salary—not a poverty wage but just a modest, lower middle income salary—your entire world can fall apart when you lose access to a quality childcare environment. People have to quit their jobs.

They have to move back in with their parents. They have to move their entire family to a different city or a different State. Your entire life gets upended when you can't find care for your child because you will upend your entire life for your child. Nothing matters more than making sure your child is safe.

So what we are forcing our families to do simply because we don't choose to do the right thing and provide funding to make sure there is affordable, quality childcare available—it is sending our families into unnecessary crisis all over this country.

In my State, I have had 124,000 parents report that their work has been disrupted by childcare issues, that they have had to leave work, that they have had to leave employment because of an interruption in childcare.

Our childcare centers in Connecticut—and we are a high-cost childcare State. We are a high-cost State in general. Eighty-nine percent of them report that they have had difficulty hiring staff, 60 percent of them say that right now they are understaffed, and 70 percent of them say that they have wait lists for new families, which just shows you that all over Connecticut, we have a total mismatch between the number of slots and the number of families who need those slots.

Of course, that delivers enormous harm to families but also to our workforce. I met a young woman a few weeks ago who lives in Hartford. She has a very young child. They are on a waitlist for a subsidized childcare slot. She wants to actually be a childcare worker. She wants to help solve the workforce shortage. But she can't get into the workforce. Why? Because she has to stay home to take care of her young child.

So this cycle that ends up impacting not just families but our economy writ large is one that we have to break.

I just want to leave you with this one last piece of math to just explain how serious this situation is in my State.

In Connecticut, we have a program called Care for Kids, and this is a program that does for lower income families—tries to give them some subsidy so that they can afford childcare. But that program cuts off for a one-child family at \$41,500 a year income. That is a lower middle income salary in Connecticut. That is a salary that is not unfamiliar in my State.

Let me just do the very quick math for you. For a family of three, a two-bedroom, one-bedroom house could be about \$1,800 a month. Childcare in Connecticut on average is going to be about \$15,000 a year. Total up just the costs for a family who makes just above the threshold to qualify for our subsidy programs. Let's say a family makes \$42,000, doesn't qualify for our subsidy programs, is spending \$22,000 a year on rent, and is spending \$15,000 a year on childcare. That is \$37,000 a year. They make \$42,000. They have

\$5,000 left. That is \$10 a week for everything else—for food, for your cell phone, for clothes for your kid. If you are making above the rate of subsidy in Connecticut, just the cost of childcare and rent leaves you with \$10 a week to survive. In the richest, most affluent country in the world, how can we justify leaving families who are doing the right thing, who are working, in that position?

That is why I am so glad to be here on the floor with my colleagues pleading with our Republican friends to do the right thing and support the President's proposed plan to support affordable, quality childcare in this country, for the families I represent in Connecticut.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I am so pleased to be joining with my colleagues today to talk about something that is so fundamentally important for our families.

So many times, I have heard from folks saying: We are paying more for childcare than our mortgage payment and trying to keep our house together.

It is very frightening for many families trying to juggle those costs. So we have an urgent need for our families, for our economy, for our future.

Every morning, millions of families in Michigan and across the country go through the very same ritual. Sleepy children are roused out of bed, clothes are chosen, breakfasts are eaten, faces are washed, teeth are brushed, snacks are packed, and then it is a scramble out the door. Car seats are buckled and off to the local childcare center. Only then can mom or dad's workday begin. For millions of families, this essential daily routine is at risk of falling apart.

The American childcare system, already under severe strain before the pandemic, now is in danger of collapse. During the pandemic, I am so proud that we as Democrats cheered critical emergency funding that helped keep 10 million children in childcare. That funding expired, as colleagues have indicated, on September 30. Without it, more than 700,000 childcare programs could close—700,000—and 3.2 million families could be left scrambling.

As programs are forced to close their doors, quality care will be harder and harder to find, and what care is available will be harder and harder for families to afford.

Some people may say: You know, I don't have kids in childcare. Why should I care?

You will care when your doctor or dental appointment gets canceled because the nurse or the hygienist can't find anyone to watch their children that day. You will care when your favorite coffee shop shuts down because the owners can't find enough workers. You will care when your very best employee has to drop out of the workforce and stay home with her baby because she can't find quality, affordable childcare.

The childcare industry is like the scaffolding that our entire economy rests on. When that scaffolding collapses, down goes the economy. President Biden understands that, and he has requested the critical funding needed to keep this crucial scaffolding standing. It is time that we come together on a bipartisan basis and act. American families, American parents, and children just can't wait.

Just as importantly, we have another challenge we need to be meeting right now that relates to families, to moms and kids. We need to ensure that American moms and American babies aren't going hungry on our watch.

We have this wonderful program that has been supported on a bipartisan basis since the beginning called the WIC—Women, Infants, and Children—Program. It is a program that provides critical food assistance, medical screenings, breastfeeding support, baby formula, and nutrition education to pregnant moms, new moms, and children under age 5.

Right now, we also have a funding cliff happening and a critical need for funding. Since 1997, WIC has been fully funded to cover all eligible moms and babies and prevent waiting lists. Now, we can all come together. We should all be coming together to want healthy babies—pregnant moms being healthy, delivering healthy babies, and having the nutrition available for moms and babies during the early years of a child's life. That is what WIC does, and it has been fully funded since 1997.

Congress has always understood there can't be a waiting list for pregnant moms. How do you have a waiting list when the whole pregnancy lasts 9 months? It makes no sense. To get the nutrition that moms need and that babies need, we have to make sure there are not waiting lists, and newborns just keep growing whether they have the food they need or not.

But now there is a \$1 billion shortfall in the funding of the program. Without funding, full funding, moms and babies are at risk of being put on waiting lists for the first time ever in the history of the program in the United States or of seeing critical nutritional support cut. This would take away essential nutrition assistance during a critical time in a baby's life. Soon, States are going to start making decisions about their budgets, and we need to provide assurance to States that they can continue to serve everyone and keep their promise—our promise—to moms and babies.

As anyone who has done it knows, raising a family is a tough, tough job. The last thing parents should worry about when they are trying to wash those faces and find those coats and get the kids out the door is whether or not their childcare center is going to be open and available or whether they will lose the baby formula that their baby needs.

American families are raising the next generation. We always say children are our future. The fact is, they

don't wait to grow up. Whether we act or not, they just keep growing. We need to have a sense of urgency about this. We all care about our children. We need to act to make sure quality, affordable childcare is there and the nutrition support for our moms and babies is there as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today in strong support of Senator MURRAY's Child Care Stabilization Act.

We know how much of a lifeline this program has been for families, for childcare providers, and our economy since it was established in 2021. Thanks to this program, 220,000 childcare providers stayed afloat. Up to 10 million kids' childcare slots were saved, and the unemployment rate for moms with kids under age 6 empowered moms to return to work at rates we have not seen.

The need for high-quality childcare is one of those issues I hear about all over Minnesota, from the Iron Range up north to our farming towns in Southern Minnesota, from urban areas in the Twin Cities to suburbs across the metro. It doesn't matter how qualified you are or how badly you may want a job, if there is no one to watch your kids, you can't go to work. Too often, people are in this situation because there are simply no childcare options.

I think about Pam and her husband, who live in Cottage Grove, MN. They both work full time and rely on daycare centers to look after their two little kids. They are paying more than \$2,800 a month for childcare, meaning Pam's husband's whole paycheck goes toward paying those costs.

Pam told me:

We may soon join the increasing ranks of parents forced to leave the workforce because they have no other option.

Another Minnesotan, Erin, is a new mom, who a year after having her baby still can't find an open childcare spot. She sent email after email to local providers, but all she got in response was an overwhelming number of "no infant openings." Many of these providers told Erin that they wouldn't have openings for years. When she finally found an opening, she could hardly afford it.

Then there is Amelia, who lives in Richfield—a southern suburb in the Twin Cities—and pays over \$15,000 a year for each of her two kids. Her family is facing the same dilemma as so many others:

We can't pay our mortgage if I stay home, but we barely take anything home after paying to send our twins to preschool.

Pam, Erin, and Amelia, who live in different parts of our State—and they have way different jobs—and the 51 percent of Americans who also live in childcare deserts deserve better. They deserve high-quality childcare that is in their budgets and that actually has open spots for kids.

The good news? We have been making progress in my State. Here are a few examples.

In Redwood Falls, a brandnew childcare center will provide the area with more than 70 new childcare slots with a combination of funding, private and public.

The town of Morris—a college town near South Dakota—started a program that I visited. They have six childcare pods. They are apartments that could be converted to senior housing if they want, but it allows small providers—who maybe have six to eight kids—to have a place that is safe for the kids. They share a parking lot and the like. That facility in a smaller town serves more than 80 kids.

Just a few weeks ago, I was in new facilities in Perham, MN, at the Children's Corner. Those were two companies—one is food manufacturing, with about 700 employees, the other a healthcare company. They combined and paid for the expansion of the existing private childcare nonprofit facility, doubled the number of childcare slots, and got some promised to their kids out of those companies but a whole lot more for everyone else.

Fiscal year 2023 congressionally directed spending also made it possible for the Hallie Q. Brown-Martin Luther King Service Center in St. Paul to build additional daycare facilities.

We are making huge steps in the right direction, including coming out of our State legislature in the last year, but Congress needs to pick up this momentum to do right by people like Pam and Erin and Amelia and pass the Child Care Stabilization Act.

For far too many parents, the lack of available, affordable childcare is a barrier to finding a job. I thank Senator MURRAY for this incredibly important legislation. While we work to strengthen our childcare workforce—it has got to be a piece of this in a big way—and build facilities where families need them the most, we need to ensure that our childcare centers have the funding they need to provide affordable, high-quality care.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I rise today, along with my colleagues, because, as the President pro tempore has heard, we have a childcare crisis in this country. Families can't afford it; employers don't have the funds to subsidize it; and providers can't pay their workers. In my home State of Nevada, it can cost more to send your kids to childcare than it does to send them to college. It is just outrageous, and we have to do something about it.

One of the many consequences of this crisis is that some parents who can't afford childcare have to stay home with their kids instead of reentering the workforce. I hear this all the time in Nevada. Nearly 39 percent of women with children younger than 5 years old

have quit their jobs in the last 3 years. Over 90 percent of those women willingly decided to leave their jobs and stop earning an income, not because they were laid off or had their hours cut back but because they needed to stay home with their children because they lacked the resources for childcare in this country to afford it. It is hurting our families. It is hurting our children and our economy, quite frankly. We must expand access to childcare now.

We took steps to lower childcare costs for families when we passed the American Rescue Plan. That funding has made a difference for families across the country. In Nevada, that means families of four that make up to \$70,000 a year are getting help covering their childcare costs. It means all copays for childcare programs have been waived. It means that thousands of families across my State have been able to breathe easier knowing that they won't have to choose between groceries and their kids' tuitions.

A perfect example is Christine McNally, who lives in Northern Nevada, in Reno. She works with these families every day at her two childcare centers in Northern Nevada. She told me about a single mom she works with who has three kids. Now, before the American Rescue Plan passed that lowered childcare costs, this mother was paying \$120 per week in copays. That is \$120 per week. Not having to cover the cost of these copays anymore has been huge for her and her family. It has helped alleviate so much financial pressure. Now she can pay her electric bills without having to worry about covering other costs, including childcare.

The problem is, as we have heard from our colleagues, this legislation expired this year, and, unfortunately, we don't have all of our colleagues who want to continue to support this. What I am hearing from some really far-right Republicans is a refusal to work with us to extend this program, and that is going to be devastating for so many families across the country, including in Nevada, including Christine's families whom she works with.

Thousands of them are going to see skyrocketing costs next year. Parents who have no one else to look after their children will face impossible choices, and many will choose to leave the workforce so that they can care for their kids themselves. Providers won't be able to continue to pay their staffs, forcing many to look for employment elsewhere, and childcare programs across the country will shut down. Families will have to stay on longer waiting lists for even more time to access the remaining programs. We just cannot let that happen.

Childcare is critical for our families. This isn't a partisan issue; this is about helping working families across the country. This is what they want. This is what I hear in my State. This is what I hear across the country. We

have to pass the Child Care Stabilization Act now to protect it and to protect our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, across the country, parents and caregivers are bending over backward to try to get their children in early education. They are paying tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket, relying on family, friends, and neighbors, or are simply giving up work or their own educations because they can't find a childcare program with an opening. At the same time, overworked and underpaid providers are struggling to prop up childcare programs, burning themselves out, and leaving empty, shuttered classrooms behind them.

The system is broken, and if we leave it broken, we are failing multiple generations of people who are relying upon us to fix it—to fix the broken system.

As Marian Wright Edelman said, investing in children is not a national luxury or a national choice; it is a national necessity—a national necessity for our future.

If we want the 21st century to be better than the 20th century, we don't have a choice—it is a necessity.

When the pandemic began, Congress stepped up and provided the largest ever onetime investment in the childcare sector through the American Rescue Plan, and it worked. In Massachusetts, childcare providers received higher pay; programs stayed safe and open in more places and for more hours through the day. We kept classrooms open and prevented families from trying to decide how to continue working and finding a safe place for their children to learn, to grow, and to thrive.

But the pandemic-era money is drying up, and those cracks that ruptured in 2020 were from years of underinvestment long before we had ever heard of COVID-19. If we fail to maintain this investment—if we fail 3.2 million children who would lose their care and the 232,000 childcare workers who would lose their jobs—then it would be a tragedy for our country. It would ultimately be an economic catastrophe for our country that we did not invest in those children in the same way that we were invested in by preceding generations.

One of the reasons that they called an earlier generation the “greatest generation,” they weren't as wealthy as us, but they were wiser than us. They knew that every child had to be invested in. And that is why we are the country that we are today.

The challenge for this generation is, are we as wise as preceding generations? Do we understand that it is only out of selfishness that we would not make the same decision that those earlier generations made in children to whom they were not related either, who did not come from the same ethnic group as they did either, but they did it because it would help our country?

I am so proud that Massachusetts is a leader in childcare. State-level investments have saved almost 1,000 programs and 18,000 seats across the State from closure. But we can't expect States to keep plugging the holes of a failing system. We can't keep letting early educators and childcare providers bear the weight of underinvestment. We can't let generations of families fall behind because of a broken system. And we cannot let our childcare system—and all of the children, all of the families, all of the workers and providers in it—fall off a cliff because there isn't enough funding for the children in our country to get the care that they need.

We need to give States the financial freedom to invest, to improve quality, to reduce costs, and to expand access. We need to guarantee children and families have high-quality childcare. We need a national, permanent solution to the childcare crisis.

If we want kids to thrive when they start school, if we want families to move out of poverty, we need to fund stabilization, support children and families, and build a childcare system that works.

So I thank Senator MURRAY for her great historic leadership on this issue, for fighting for all of those children in our country to make sure they get the help that they deserve, because they are the ones who are going to make America better in the 21st century.

Young people are only 20 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future. That is all Senator MURRAY is talking about. Let us invest in them in the same way that we were invested in by previous generations.

NOMINATION OF JAMEL SEMPER

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Jamel Semper to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Mr. Semper attended Hampton University and Rutgers Law School before clerking for Judge Harold Fullilove on the Essex County Superior Court of New Jersey. He then spent 10 years as a state prosecutor in both the Union County Prosecutor's Office and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, where he prosecuted a range of criminal offenses, including sexual assault, firearms offenses, fraud, and murder. During this time, he was also the lead prosecutor in a domestic terrorism and murder case that involved the first prosecution of a homicide under New Jersey's domestic terrorism statute. In 2018, Mr. Semper joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey. He now serves as deputy chief of the office's criminal division and is responsible for implementation of the office's violent crime reduction strategy. Mr. Semper is a highly experienced litigator, having tried at least 40 cases to verdict, including both jury and bench trials.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Mr. Semper “well qualified” to serve on the district court, and

the New Jersey Senators strongly support his nomination.

Mr. Semper's deep ties to New Jersey and proven dedication to equal justice will make him an asset to the district court. I will vote in favor of his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MARKEY. With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back, and that the scheduled vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON SEMPER NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Semper nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 322 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Butler	Kennedy	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Osoff	Whitehouse
Graham	Padilla	Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lummis	Thune
Cotton	Marshall	Tillis
Cramer	McConnell	Tuberville
Crapo	Moran	Vance
Daines	Mullin	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Ricketts	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz Hickenlooper

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 377, Shanlyn A.S. Park, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, Jeanne Shaheen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz, John W. Hickenlooper, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Shanlyn A.S. Park, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 323 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin Hassan Reed
Bennet Heinrich Rosen
Blumenthal Hirono Sanders
Booker Kaine Schatz
Brown Kelly Schumer
Butler King Shaheen
Cantwell Klobuchar Sinema
Cardin Lujan Smith
Carper Manchin Stabenow
Casey Markey Tester
Collins Menendez Van Hollen
Coons Merkley Warner
Cortez Masto Murkowski Warnock
Duckworth Murphy Warren
Durbin Murray Welch
Fetterman Ossoff Whitehouse
Gillibrand Padilla Wyden
Graham Peters

NAYS—44

Barrasso Cramer Kennedy
Blackburn Crapo Lankford
Boozman Daines Lee
Braun Ernst Lummis
Britt Fischer Marshall
Budd Grassley McConnell
Capito Hagerty Moran
Cassidy Hoeven Mullin
Cornyn Hyde-Smith Paul
Cotton Johnson Ricketts

Risch Scott (FL) Tuberville
Romney Scott (SC) Vance
Rounds Sullivan Wicker
Rubio Thune Young
Schmitt Tillis

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz Hawley Hickenlooper

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Shanlyn A.S. Park, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 143, 220, 272, and 274; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the en bloc nominations of Ann Marie Yastishock, of Pennsylvania, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Solomon Islands and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Vanuatu; Heather Roach Variava, of Iowa, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Vernelle Trim FitzPatrick, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Gabonese Republic; and Kara C. McDonald, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Lithuania?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, H.R. 6363, a continuing resolution to avoid a shutdown, was enacted into law this month. Division B of the bill contains several authorizing provisions, such as a 1-year extension of the farm bill and a 2-month extension of Federal funding for community health centers that are paid for over 10 years. Section 121(c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 contains a reserve fund that authorizes the Budget Committee chairman to revise budget aggregates, committee allocations, and the pay-as-you-go ledger for legislation that would not increase the deficit over the period of fiscal years 2024 to 2033. Division B of H.R. 6363 meets the conditions of that reserve fund. However, the legislation directs that these budgetary effects are not to be entered on the PAYGO scorecard. As such, I am revising only the budget aggregates and committee allocations to accommodate H.R. 6363.

I previously revised the pay-as-you-go ledger for H.R. 5860, the September continuing resolution. As the legislation has now been signed into law and directs that its budgetary effects are not to be entered on the PAYGO scorecard, I am reversing the PAYGO adjustment I made in October.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables, which provide details about the adjustment, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE SENATE

(Pursuant to Section 121(c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023) (\$ in billions)

Table with 2 columns: Description and Balances. Rows include Current Balances (Fiscal Year 2024: 0.257, 2024-2028: 0.438, 2024-2033: -0.002), Revisions (Fiscal Year 2024: -0.257, 2024-2028: -0.438, 2024-2033: 0.002), and Revised Balances (Fiscal Year 2024: 0, 2024-2028: 0, 2024-2033: 0).

REVISIONS TO BUDGET AGGREGATES—BUDGET AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS

(Pursuant to Section 121(c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023) (\$ in billions)

Table with 2 columns: Description and 2024. Rows include Current Spending Aggregates (Budget Authority: 4,957.066).

REVISIONS TO BUDGET AGGREGATES—BUDGET
AUTHORITY AND OUTLAYS—Continued

(Pursuant to Section 121(c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023)
(\$ in billions)

	2024
Outlays	5,081.501
Adjustment:	
Budget Authority	1.589
Outlays	0.954
Revised Aggregates:	
Budget Authority	4,958.655
Outlays	5,082.455

REVISIONS TO ALLOCATIONS TO SENATE COMMITTEES
(Pursuant to Section 121(c) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023)
(\$ in billions)

	2024	2024–2028	2024–2033
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:			
Budget Authority	190.758	1,002.518	2,088.798
Outlays	191.517	972.954	1,974.649
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0.159	0.048	0
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	190.758	1,002.518	2,088.798
Outlays	191.676	973.002	1,974.649
Finance:			
Budget Authority	3,449.542	19,587.359	46,205.293
Outlays	3,458.396	19,589.773	46,198.480
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	0.771	–1.818	–0.818
Outlays	0.484	–1.434	–0.818
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	3,450.313	19,585.541	46,204.475
Outlays	3,458.880	19,588.339	46,197.662
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:			
Budget Authority	59.797	255.274	505.369
Outlays	85.647	295.807	521.863
Adjustments:			
Budget Authority	0.818	0.818	0.818
Outlays	0.311	0.818	0.818
Revised Allocation:			
Budget Authority	60.615	256.092	506.187
Outlays	85.958	296.625	522.681

Note: The adjustments represent the direct spending effects of Division B of H.R. 6363. Within the division, Title I is in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, Subtitle A of Title II is in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Health, Labor, Education, and Pensions. Subtitles B, C, and D of Title II are in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Finance.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 314, the Motion to Invoke Cloture on Jeffrey M. Bryan, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 315, confirmation of Jeffrey M. Bryan, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 316, the Motion to Invoke Cloture on Margaret M. Garnett, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 317, confirmation of Margaret M. Garnett, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 318, the Motion to Invoke Cloture on Jose Javier Rodriguez to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

PANCREATIC DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the month of November as Pancreatic Disease Awareness Month on behalf of Americans across the country suffering from pancreatic diseases.

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas, a large gland behind the stomach. The pancreas has two main functions, to make insulin and to make enzymes that help you digest food. Pancreatitis occurs when enzymes damage the pancreas. It can be acute or chronic, and either form can lead to pain, organ failure, diabetes, disability, and sometimes death.

There remains a troubling lack of awareness about conditions of the pancreas, such as knowing the signs and symptoms and proper treatment. This can lead to years of misdiagnosis and increasing severity of the disease.

While scientific progress has been made because of investment in medical research through the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense, treatment options for pancreatitis are limited. Chronic or severe cases may require organ removal or significant surgical procedures. I am proud to work with my colleagues on an annual basis to support and increase funding for Federal medical research programs to sustain progress toward innovative treatment options and better patient care.

In addition to limited treatment options, people affected by pancreatic diseases face challenges with health coverage and access to specialty care. Progress has been made with the enactment of legislation like the No Surprises Act and adoption of an out-of-pocket cap in Medicare part D through the Inflation Reduction Act, but more can be done to lower out-of-pocket costs.

As a member of the HELP, Finance, and Aging Committees, the three committees in the Senate that handle healthcare issues, I will continue to work with my colleagues to address coverage, access, and health equity issues impacting individuals affected by conditions of the pancreas, as well as patients across the country.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing November as National Pancreatic Disease Awareness Month.

TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN HOUSTON

Mr. REED. Madam President, today I pay tribute to a dear friend and one of Rhode Island's most thoughtful and visionary civic leaders, Jonathan "Jon" Houston. After 45 years of tireless advocacy, Jon will be relinquishing his role as executive chairman of Justice Assistance, the nonprofit organization he founded both to assist victims of crime and to provide meaningful support for ex-offenders.

I have been privileged to know Jon since our time together as students at

La Salle Academy in Providence, R.I. After high school, Jon went on to graduate from the University of Rhode Island before completing advanced management certification programs at Harvard and Salve Regina University. He also served on a number of public safety boards and commissions in Rhode Island, but his vision in founding Justice Assistance in 1978 stands as a signature achievement in the area of criminal justice reform.

It is no small task to radically change the way we treat and look at victims of crime, nor is it easy to take on the challenges facing former offenders after they have completed their sentences, but that is why Jon has become such a respected figure in the community. He has dedicated his life to a problem that few others were stepping up to solve. And Justice Assistance has been enormously successful. According to the Providence Journal, Justice Assistance's sentencing alternative program—one of the organization's major initiatives—has collected over \$5 million in restitution on behalf of victims of crime, and 90 percent of its court-referred clients successfully complete its ex-offender intervention and support programs. Justice Assistance's success is a testament to Jon's tenacity and devotion.

Rhode Islanders have been fortunate to have Jon dedicate more than four decades to strengthening our communities and developing systems of support for those who may otherwise not have had any. I, too, have experienced Jon's knowledge, insights, and humility on criminal justice reform when I worked with him to increase Federal support for innovative and transformative solutions to recidivism and for victim protection.

Jon has undoubtedly made a mark on Rhode Island. His work and advocacy have directly impacted the lives of thousands who have come in contact with our criminal justice system. Through Justice Assistance, Jon's work will continue to improve lives of victims and offenders for years to come, but this won't be the only way his mission carries on after the mantle is passed. Jon was the primary author of the "Rights of Victims of Crime" amendment in the State constitution, the first constitutional amendment in the Nation dedicated to protecting the rights of crime victims. In a very literal sense, Jon's passion and words have been permanently added to the foundational document of the state.

I would also like to take the time to recognize Jon's wife Pamela, his daughter Shannon, and his son Adam. I join many others in the State in thanking Jon for his service to our communities and the well-being of those impacted by crime. I wish him fulfillment and continued success in his next chapter.

TRIBUTE TO PAT TOWELL, Ph.D.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise to honor William Patrick "Pat"

Towell, Ph.D., for his more than 17 years of service to Congress and the American people as a specialist in U.S. Defense Policy and Budget at the Congressional Research Service, CRS. Dr. Towell is widely recognized as a foremost defense policy expert. Senators, Members of Congress, and staff have all relied on his knowledge, expertise, and guidance at pivotal points in the development of the annual defense authorization and appropriations bills. Having served with CRS since 2006, Dr. Towell will retire at the end of this year.

Throughout his tenure at CRS, Dr. Towell has advised congressional leaders, Department of Defense civilian and military officials, and foreign dignitaries on a range of defense policy and budgetary matters. A political scientist by training, he has exhibited a profound respect for the institution of Congress and an encyclopedic knowledge of the events and political personalities that have shaped defense issues. In addition to coordinating and authoring reports on annual defense authorization and appropriations legislation, Dr. Towell has written insightfully about key strategic guidance documents such as the Quadrennial Defense Review and the National Defense Strategy. He has also provided analyses of the debates over how to best organize the Federal Government to address national security challenges, and he has closely monitored funding for post-9/11 military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Dr. Towell's vast knowledge of the history of congressional operations has been an important source of institutional memory, particularly for newer Members and staff seeking to understand the lessons that can be drawn from past debates. A gifted public speaker known for his humor, quick wit, and enthusiasm in discussing defense matters, Dr. Towell has often presented at CRS's new Member seminar, an orientation for new Members of Congress, in Williamsburg, VA. He has served as a CRS speaker or panelist for visiting delegations from the U.S. war colleges, the NATO Defense College, and foreign Parliaments sponsored by the House Democracy Partnership. Dr. Towell also has participated in a staff exchange with the European Parliamentary Research Service—EPRS—in Brussels. For many years, he helped to organize and present at CRS's annual defense budget seminar for congressional staff. Drawing on a deep professional network built over decades of experience in both journalism and policy, Dr. Towell has mentored colleagues in part by organizing internal discussions with various defense scholars and practitioners, from leading think tank experts to senior Defense Department civilian leaders.

Before joining CRS, Dr. Towell was a lecturer in political science at California State College, Bakersfield from 1972 to 1975, a defense reporter at Con-

gressional Quarterly from 1975 to 2003, and a fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments from 2003 to 2006. He received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Georgetown University in Washington, DC; a master's degree in political science from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL; and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL.

On behalf of the U.S. Senate and the American people, I express deep gratitude for the contributions of Dr. Towell during his nearly two decades at CRS. Along with his family, friends, and colleagues, I thank him and wish him and his wife K.T. all the best in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO HENRIK MECINSKI

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Henrik for his hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Henrik is a native of New Jersey. He attends George Washington University, where he studies international affairs as well as law and society. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Henrik for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.

TRIBUTE TO VIENNA SCOTT

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Vienna for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Vienna is a native of Connecticut. She recently graduated from Yale University with an undergraduate degree in religious studies and political science, as well as a masters in religion and literature. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Vienna for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

TRIBUTE TO EDEN SISKIND

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to

express my appreciation to Eden for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Eden is a native of New Jersey. She attends Cornell University, where she studies communications, as well as law and society. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Eden for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

TRIBUTE TO HANDEN TORSACK

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Handen for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Handen is a native of Utah. He is currently a senior at Utah Valley University, where he is studying political science. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Handen for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all the best on his journey.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DICKENS ON THE STRAND FESTIVAL

● Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, Texas is home to many unique festivals that celebrate the food, music, and culture that have shaped our State. This year marks the 50th anniversary of an event "Texas Monthly" once dubbed "one of the most beloved and bizarre holiday traditions in Texas"—Dickens on the Strand.

Each December, the Galveston Historical Foundation hosts the Dickens on the Strand Festival, which celebrates the life and work of renowned novelist Charles Dickens. Throughout its history, this holiday festival has played a critical role in revitalizing and restoring the Strand National Historic Landmark District. This year's festival is expected to welcome more than 50,000 guests to the island.

Though Charles Dickens never set foot in Galveston, his descendants have attended the festival every year since 1986, and this year will be no exception.

Eight descendants of Charles Dickens are expected to attend this year's festival and provide readings of Dickens' work.

The festival also honors our proud and historic ties between Texas and the United Kingdom. In 1846, the first British Consulate in the Lone Star State was established in Galveston, and it remained open until 1939. The Second British Consul-General to Texas, Arthur Lynn, is buried in Galveston's City Cemetery.

I am pleased that the British Consulate-General in Houston will be the presenting sponsor for this year's festival. Events will take place in multiple locations across the city, including the Salute to Sunset on the Official Tall Ship of Texas, the *Elissa*, which was built in the United Kingdom.

Galveston's holiday tradition has won 24 International Festival and Events Association Pinnacle Awards in its history. It has also brought much happiness and pride to the community and the visitors who come to take part in the celebration.

Congratulations to all involved in organizing the 50th Dickens on The Strand Festival, and I wish all of its guests, staff, and honorees a very successful weekend.●

RECOGNIZING CARVER PUMP

● Ms. ERNST. Madam President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Carver Pump of Muscatine, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1938, Carver Pump was founded by brothers Ralph and Roy J. Carver in Matherville, IL, as a specialty manufacturer of self-priming pumps that are designed to prevent air pockets from forming while pumping fluids. Shortly after its founding, Carver Pump began providing pumps to the U.S. and the Allied navies during World War II. In 1941, Roy restructured the company and relocated to its current home in Muscatine, IA. Since World War II, Carver Pump has remained committed to providing high-quality pumps to the U.S. Navy. Currently, every Navy ship-building program, which is responsible for the ship construction of the U.S. Navy fleet, relies on a centrifugal pump from Carver Pump. Due to their hard work, Carver Pump received certification for their high-quality management systems by the International Organization for Standardization. Their pumps are used in a variety of industries, including mining, agriculture, automotive, and maritime. Roy J. Carver passed away in 1981, leaving behind a legacy of hard work, philanthropy, and business excellence. Today, Carver Pump is run by Carver family member Andrew Carver.

Carver Pump is an exemplary family business. Multiple generations of the

Carver family have worked at the company and been recognized for their contributions to both the pump industry and philanthropic efforts in Iowa. In 2019, Roy and his wife Lucille were posthumously awarded the Muscatine Community College Legends award for their continued legacy in Iowa. The Roy J. Carver Trust was also posthumously established and has been involved with the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Augustana College. At the University of Iowa, the Carver-Hawkeye Arena and Roy J. and Lucille Carver College of Medicine are named after Roy J. and Lucille in honor of their continued support of the university's academic and athletic programs. In 2023, Carver Pump celebrated its 85th business anniversary.

Carver Pump's commitment to producing high-quality pumps in Muscatine and supplying critical products to help the U.S. military is clear. I want to congratulate Andrew Carver, the Carver family, and the entire team at Carver Pump for their continued dedication to providing high-quality pumps throughout the world. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE SAITO

● Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate Bruce Saito, director of the California Conservation Corps—CCC—on a decades-long career spent protecting California's environment, building a climate workforce of the future, and introducing generations of Californians to the conservation movement.

Today, the CCC is the oldest and largest conservation corps in the country and stands as a hallmark of California's commitment to the environment. But in 1977, just 1 year into its nascent mission, a young Bruce Saito signed up to serve with the organization as a supervisor and instructor, initiating what would become nearly a half-century of service protecting the beautiful State he grew up in.

From the beginning, Bruce worked diligently, earning promotions to become the director of the Los Angeles Urban Center and conservationist supervisor at the CCC Camarillo Center. In 1986, he left the CCC to help found the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, where he would serve for three decades transforming the nonprofit into one of the largest in the country. Thanks to Bruce, over 100,000 trees have been planted in and around Los Angeles, and parks around the city have thrived.

In 2015, Bruce would return to his roots when Governor Jerry Brown appointed him to serve as director of the CCC, where he served until October 31, 2023. In his time working there, Bruce has helped countless young Californians, giving young people valuable skills that in turn launched many of their careers and ignited lifelong passions for conservation.

California is a leader in the fight against the climate crisis—not just in the United States, but around the world. But that ethos of environmentalism, the culture of care for the community, wasn't always inevitable. California remains the environmental envy of the Nation because of people like Bruce, who not only had the passion to protect our earth but the willingness to bring others along with him.

And it is because of people like Bruce that our children's generation has a chance to know the same beauty of the land around us that we grew up with.

All of California wishes Bruce well in his much-deserved retirement, and we thank him for his decades of service.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:49 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4480. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4668. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman to publish guidance documents for certain rules, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4670. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require reporting on additional information with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5427. An act to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4480. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 4668. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman to publish guidance documents for certain rules, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 4670. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require reporting on additional information with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes;

to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 5427. An act to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2851. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Presumptive Service Connection for Rare Respiratory Cancers Due to Exposure to Fine Particulate Matter" (RIN2900-AR44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2023; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2852. A communication from the Regulation Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VA Pilot Program on Graduate Medical Education and Residency" (RIN2900-AR01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2853. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the eighteenth report to Congress on crime victims' rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2854. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the seventeenth report to Congress on crime victims' rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2855. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Annual Report for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2856. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Oxathiapiprolin; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 11426-01-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2857. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tolpyralate; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 11435-01-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2858. A communication from the Special Projects Coordinator, Rural Development Innovation Center, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guaranteed Loanmaking and Servicing Regulations" (RIN0570-AB07) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2859. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and

Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board 2022 Report to Congress; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2860. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency with respect to the situation in Nicaragua that was declared in Executive Order 13851 of November 27, 2018; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2861. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13303 with respect to the stabilization of Iraq; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2862. A communication from the Chair and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a transaction involving U.S. exports to Ukraine; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2863. A communication from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "2023 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Report"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2864. A communication from the Senior Legal Advisor for Regulatory Affairs, Financial Stability Oversight Council, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance on Nonbank Financial Company Determinations" (12 CFR Part 1310) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2865. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Enterprise Regulatory Capital Framework - Commingled Securities, Multifamily Government Subsidy, Derivatives, and Other Enhancements" (RIN2590-AB27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2866. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clearing Agency Governance and Conflicts of Interest" (RIN3235-0695) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2023; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2867. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Emergency Preparedness for Small Modular Reactors and Other Technologies" (RIN3150-AJ68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 16, 2023; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2868. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Revisions; California; San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District" (FRL No. 10663-02-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2023; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2869. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Jersey; Exemptions to Im-

prove Resiliency, Air Toxics Thresholds, PM 2.5 and Ammonia Emission Statement Reporting, and PM 2.5 in Air Permitting" (FRL No. 11034-02-R2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2023; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2870. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "New Source Performance Standards Review for Secondary Lead Smelters" (FRL No. 9630-02-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 16, 2023; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2871. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary (Economic Policy), Department of the Treasury, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2872. A communication from the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification that the asset reserves held in the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund will become inadequate under the meaning of this section within the next ten years; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2873. A communication from the Senior Legal Advisor for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Recovery Programs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds" (RIN1505-AC83) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 28, 2023; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2874. A communication from the Board of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance and Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Funds, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's 2023 Annual Report; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2875. A communication from the Board of Trustees of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's 2023 Annual Report; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. REED for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Stephen T. Koehler, to be Admiral.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Hope C. Rumpy, to be Major General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Sherman, to be Major General.

Army nominations beginning with Col. Michael A. Ake and ending with Col. Jeffrey D. Wood, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Air Force nomination of Col. Patti L. Fries, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Tommy F. Tillman, Jr., to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Steven J. Butow, to be Major General.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination

lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Air Force nomination of Cole-Christian L. Holinaty, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Vincent W. Flory, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Kirsten H. Thompson, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Michael D. McCarthy, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Benjamin T. Fedeles, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Ashly C. Ruf, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Brandon L. Sanders, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Li Zhao Mueckay and ending with Alexander T. Parmater, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 6, 2023.

Air Force nominations beginning with Zari N. Cofield and ending with Joshua D. Forsyth, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 6, 2023.

Army nomination of Samuel J. Nirenberg, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Thomas T. Booth, Jr. and ending with Ean P. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Army nominations beginning with Moises A. Castillo and ending with Truman L. Tinsley IV, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Agur S. Adams and ending with Christina F. Zimmerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 6, 2023.

Navy nominations beginning with John R. Barachie and ending with Sara A. Zanitsch, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 6, 2023.

Navy nominations beginning with Michael W. Barber, Jr. and ending with Eric J. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 6, 2023.

Space Force nominations beginning with Kelly N. Alexander and ending with Nicholas Y. Yeung, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Space Force nominations beginning with Brandon P. Alford and ending with Matthew C. Wroten, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Space Force nominations beginning with Matthew Guy Adams and ending with Shawn Woodall, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Space Force nominations beginning with Elizabeth A. Agnew and ending with Luke G. Wunderlich, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

Space Force nominations beginning with Alexander R. Allard and ending with Tyler T. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 1, 2023.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed sub-

ject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 3354. A bill to prohibit the sale of food that is, or contains, unsafe poppy seeds; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 3355. A bill to require institutions of higher education participating in Federal financial aid programs to pay a percentage of the cost of attendance for each enrolled full-time student, based on the endowment fund of the institution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KING):

S. 3356. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to modify the role and duties of United States Postal Service police officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 3357. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5120 Derry Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Hettie Simmons Love Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 3358. A bill to authorize livestock producers and their employees to take black vultures to prevent death, injury, or destruction to livestock, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 3359. A bill to authorize the seizure and forfeiture of assets of Russian kleptocrats, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. CASEY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3360. A bill to improve the full-service community school program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 3361. A bill to prohibit the use of facial recognition technology in airports, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. ERNST, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. SCHMITT):

S. 3362. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require additional information in disclosures of foreign gifts and contracts from foreign sources, restrict contracts with certain foreign entities and foreign countries of concern, require certain staff and faculty to report foreign gifts and contracts, and require disclosure of certain foreign investments within endowments; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3363. A bill to reauthorize the Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. REED, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COONS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. Res. 479. A resolution designating November 2023 as "National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 722

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit certain expenses associated with obtaining or maintaining recognized postsecondary credentials to be treated as qualified higher education expenses for purposes of 529 accounts.

S. 838

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 838, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program.

S. 866

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 866, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance tax benefits for research activities.

S. 907

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 907, a bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to exempt from inspection the slaughter of animals and the preparation of carcasses conducted at a

custom slaughter facility, and for other purposes.

S. 1085

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1085, a bill to provide authorization for nonpecuniary damages in an action resulting from a cruise ship voyage occurring on the high seas.

S. 1669

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1669, a bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 1694

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1694, a bill to abolish the Federal Insurance Office of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes.

S. 1774

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1774, a bill to amend the Social Security Act to provide for an increased Federal medical assistance percentage for State expenditures on certain behavioral health services furnished under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes.

S. 2003

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 2003, a bill to authorize the Secretary of State to provide additional assistance to Ukraine using assets confiscated from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and other sovereign assets of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 2090

At the request of Mr. MULLIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2090, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prevent the elimination of the sale of motor vehicles with internal combustion engines.

S. 2397

At the request of Mr. SCHMITT, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2397, a bill to amend section 495 of the Public Health Service Act to require inspections of foreign laboratories conducting biomedical and behavioral research to ensure compliance with applicable animal welfare requirements, and for other purposes.

S. 2477

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors

of S. 2477, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide pharmacy payment of certain services.

S. 2555

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2555, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to expand and improve the enforcement capabilities of the Attorney General, and for other purposes.

S. 2623

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2623, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to harmonize the effective dates of all rules that the Secretary is required to issue under the Corporate Transparency Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2669

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2669, a bill to require the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to issue guidance on digital assets, and for other purposes.

S. 2728

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2728, a bill to encourage reduction of disposable plastic products in units of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

S. 2757

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2757, a bill to limit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from modifying the rate of payment or reimbursement for transportation of veterans or other individuals via special modes of transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

S. 2932

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2932, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide guidance to State Medicaid agencies, public housing agencies, Continuums of Care, and housing finance agencies on connecting Medicaid beneficiaries with housing-related services and supports under Medicaid and other housing resources, and for other purposes.

S. 3047

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3047, a bill to award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, and for other purposes.

S. 3109

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Arizona

(Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 3109, a bill to require the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Commissioner of Social Security to review and simplify the processes, procedures, forms, and communications for family caregivers to assist individuals in establishing eligibility for, enrolling in, and maintaining and utilizing coverage and benefits under the Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and Social Security programs respectively, and for other purposes.

S. 3235

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3235, a bill to require a strategy to counter the role of the People's Republic of China in evasion of sanctions imposed by the United States with respect to Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 3276

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3276, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow certain alien veterans to be paroled into the United States to receive health care furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

S. 3278

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3278, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify each alien who is serving, or has served, in the Armed Forces of the United States on the application of any such alien for an immigration benefit or the placement of any such alien in an immigration enforcement proceeding, and for other purposes.

S. 3280

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3280, a bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a veterans visa program to permit veterans who have been removed from the United States to return as immigrants, and for other purposes.

S. 3317

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3317, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to revise the treatment of partnership interests received in connection with the performance of services, and for other purposes.

S. 3340

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3340, a bill to establish the Global Climate Change Resilience Strategy, to

authorize the admission of climate-displaced persons into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. J. RES. 41

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. J. Res. 41, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Executive Officer for Immigration Review relating to "Circumvention of Lawful Pathways".

S. J. RES. 49

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. J. Res. 49, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to a "Standard for Determining Joint Employer Status".

S. J. RES. 51

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. J. Res. 51, a joint resolution directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in Syria that have not been authorized by Congress.

S. RES. 471

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 471, a resolution expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging the people of the United States to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

S. RES. 476

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 476, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of a National Move Over Law Day.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KING):

S. 3356. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to modify the role and duties of United States Postal Service police officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3356

To amend title 18, United States Code, to modify the role and duties of United States Postal Service police officers, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Postal Police Reform Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. ROLE AND DUTIES OF USPS POLICE OFFICERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3061(c) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "(c)(1)" and all that follows through the end of paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

"(c)(1)(A) The Postal Service may employ police officers for duty in connection with the protection of—

"(i) the mail;

"(ii) property owned or occupied by the Postal Service or under the charge and control of the Postal Service;

"(iii) persons on the property described in clause (ii); and

"(iv) on-duty employees of the Postal Service in any location in the United States.

"(B) The duty described in subparagraph (A) may occur in areas outside the property owned or occupied by the Postal Service to the extent necessary to effect the protection described in that subparagraph.";

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "With respect to such property, such officers" and inserting "Any officer assigned to provide the protection described in paragraph (1)(A)"; and

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "such property" and inserting "the protection described in paragraph (1)(A)"; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking "committed against" and all that follows and inserting the following: "committed against—

"(i) property owned or occupied by the Postal Service or under the charge and control of the Postal Service;

"(ii) persons on the property described in clause (i); or

"(iii) on-duty employees of the Postal Service in any location in the United States.".

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 3061(c)(2)(C) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking "Unites States" and inserting "United States".

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 479—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 2023 AS "NATIONAL HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. REED, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COONS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. OSSOFF) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 479

Whereas, in the United States, public schools identified approximately 1,200,000 enrolled homeless children and youth during the 2021 to 2022 school year;

Whereas an estimated 1,000,000 children younger than 6 years of age in 2020 to 2021,

and approximately 4,200,000 youth and young adults in 2017, experienced homelessness, with many of those children, youth, and young adults staying on couches, in motels, in shelters, or outside;

Whereas infants experiencing homelessness are at a higher risk for certain illnesses and health conditions;

Whereas families experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience involvement in the child welfare system and difficulty with school attendance;

Whereas, in 2021, high school students experiencing homelessness were nearly twice as likely to have seriously considered suicide or made a suicide plan and more than 3 times as likely to have made a suicide attempt within the past year;

Whereas individuals without a high school degree or general educational development certificate are over 4.5 times more likely to report homelessness than their peers who completed high school, making lack of education the leading risk factor for homelessness;

Whereas, in 2018, the high school graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness was 68 percent, compared to 80 percent for low-income students and 85.5 percent for all students;

Whereas the rate of youth homelessness is the same in rural, suburban, and urban areas;

Whereas 29 percent of unaccompanied homeless youth between 13 and 25 years of age have spent time in foster care, compared to approximately 6 percent of all children;

Whereas homelessness among children and youth is a complex issue that often occurs with deep poverty, low education and employment levels, substance misuse and use disorders, mental health disorders, lack of affordable housing, and family conflict; and

Whereas awareness of child and youth homelessness must be heightened to encourage greater support for effective programs to help children and youth overcome homelessness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the efforts of businesses, governments, organizations, educators, and volunteers dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless children and youth;

(2) applauds the initiatives of businesses, governments, organizations, educators, and volunteers that—

(A) use time and resources to raise awareness of child and youth homelessness, the causes of child and youth homelessness, and potential solutions; and

(B) work to prevent homelessness among children and youth;

(3) designates November 2023 as "National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month"; and

(4) encourages businesses, governments, organizations, educators, and volunteers to continue to intensify their efforts to address homelessness among children and youth during November 2023.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

(The committees are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Jeremy King, a Secret Service detailee from my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that three fellows in my office, Emilie Benson, Emily Hentschke, and Christopher Jackson, be granted floor privileges until September 1, 2024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ROSA PARKS FEDERAL BUILDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 176, S. 1278.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1278) to designate the Federal building located at 985 Michigan Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, as the "Rosa Parks Federal Building", and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1278) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1278

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ROSA PARKS FEDERAL BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Federal building located at 985 Michigan Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the "Rosa Parks Federal Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Rosa Parks Federal Building".

(c) REPEALS.—
(1) Public Law 109-98 (119 Stat. 2168) is repealed.

(2) Sections 1 and 2 of Public Law 109-101 (119 Stat. 2171) are repealed.

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT SUSTAINING AID AND VITAL EMERGENCY RESOURCES ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2644 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2644) to establish standards for trauma kits purchased using funds provided under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a

third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2644) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2644

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "American Law Enforcement Sustaining Aid and Vital Emergency Resources Act" or the "American Law Enforcement SAVER Act".

SEC. 2. TRAUMA KIT STANDARDS.

Section 521 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10202) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) TRAUMA KITS.—

“(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ‘trauma kit’ means a first aid response kit that—

“(A) includes, at a minimum, a bleeding control kit that can be used for controlling life-threatening hemorrhage, which shall include—

“(i) a tourniquet recommended by the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care;

“(ii) a bleeding control bandage;

“(iii) a pair of nonlatex protective gloves and a pen-type marker;

“(iv) a pair of blunt-ended scissors;

“(v) instructional documents developed—
“(I) under the STOP THE BLEED national awareness campaign of the Department of Homeland Security, or any successor thereto;

“(II) by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma;

“(III) by the American Red Cross; or

“(IV) by any partner of the Department of Defense; and

“(vi) a bag or other container adequately designed to hold the contents of the kit; and
“(B) may include any additional trauma kit supplies that—

“(i) are approved by a State, local, or Tribal law enforcement agency or first responders;

“(ii) can adequately treat a traumatic injury; and

“(iii) can be stored in a readily available kit.

“(2) REQUIREMENT FOR TRAUMA KITS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a grantee may only purchase a trauma kit using funds made available under this part if the trauma kit meets the performance standards established by the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance under paragraph (3)(A).

“(B) AUTHORITY TO SEPARATELY ACQUIRE.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall prohibit a grantee from separately acquiring the components of a trauma kit and assembling complete trauma kits that meet the performance standards.

“(3) PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND OPTIONAL AGENCY BEST PRACTICES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, in consultation with organizations representing trauma surgeons, emergency medical response professionals, emergency physicians, and other medical professionals, relevant law enforcement agencies of States and units of local government, professional law enforcement organizations, local law enforcement labor or representative organizations, and law enforcement trade associations, shall—

“(A) develop and publish performance standards for trauma kits that are eligible for purchase using funds made available under this part; and

“(B) develop and publish optional best practices for law enforcement agencies regarding—

“(i) training law enforcement officers in the use of trauma kits;

“(ii) the deployment and maintenance of trauma kits in law enforcement vehicles; and

“(iii) the deployment, location, and maintenance of trauma kits in law enforcement agency or other government facilities.”.

NATIONAL HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 479, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 479) designating November 2023 as "National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 479) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Thursday, November 30; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Park nomination, postcloture, and that all time be considered expired at 11:30 a.m.; further, that upon the disposition of the Park nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Ramirez nomination and that the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the Ramirez nomination at 1:45 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator SANDERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

ISRAEL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise to say a few words about the awful situation in the Middle East. As you know and the American people know, there have been five wars—five wars—in the last 15 years between Israel and Hamas.

How do we end the current one and prevent a sixth war from happening sooner or later? How do we balance our desire to stop the fighting with the need to address the root causes of this conflict?

And here is the sad truth—and it really is a very sad truth. For 75 years, diplomats, well-intentioned Israelis and Palestinians, and government leaders all over the world, including Presidents of the United States, have struggled to bring peace to this region. And during that time, among many other things, an Egyptian President and an Israeli Prime Minister were assassinated by extremists.

Do you know why? Because they tried to bring peace to the region. This is an incredibly difficult and complicated issue, and nobody has any simple solution to it.

As one of the first Members of Congress to call for a humanitarian pause to the bombing, I have been very encouraged to see that pause finally happen over the last 5 days and to see its extension earlier this week. That is a very positive development.

This temporary cease-fire has brought some relief to Gaza and to the families of the more than 100 hostages released so far. The break in fighting has let an average of 200 trucks per day to enter Gaza, carrying desperately needed food, water, medical supplies, and the fuel necessary to distribute aid, pump water, and run hospitals and bakeries.

While this is only 40 percent—and people must recognize this, before the war, there were 500 trucks coming in a day, and now, there are 200—it is still a very substantial improvement over where we were a few weeks ago.

It seems to me that our job now is to keep working to extend this window further and to get more aid in and to get more hostages out—more aid in, more hostages out. Right now, critical talks are under way that will hopefully provide the United Nations the time it needs to establish a sustained humanitarian operation that can meet people's basic needs and provide shelter and medical care. And let us be clear: The needs in Gaza are beyond enormous.

For those of us who want not only to bring this war to an end but to avoid future ones, we must first be clear-eyed about the facts. On October 7, Hamas—a terrorist organization—unleashed a brutal attack against Israel, killing about 1,200 innocent men, women, and children and taking more than 200 hostages.

No one—no one—in the U.S. Senate, no one in Congress, denies that Israel has the right to respond to that murderous attack. Unfortunately, however, under the leadership of its rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is under indictment for corruption and whose Cabinet includes outright racists, Israel unleashed what amounts to almost total war against the Palestinian people.

Israel's widespread bombing has left nearly 15,000 people dead—that is in a 7-week period—15,000 people dead, two-thirds of whom are women and children. And tens of thousands of others were wounded.

Israel's military campaign, up to this point, according to U.N. estimates, damaged or destroyed 45 percent of the housing in Gaza—45 percent—and displaced nearly 1.8 million people. The Israeli attacks, up to this point, have killed 109 United Nations workers and left millions of Gazans on the brink of starvation, lacking medical care, electricity, or fuel.

This is a humanitarian catastrophe that risks, among other things, igniting a wider regional conflagration. We all want this horror to end as soon as possible. To make progress, however, we must grapple with the complexity of this situation.

First, Hamas has made it clear, before and after—after—their October 7 attack that its goal is perpetual warfare and the destruction of the State of Israel. Several weeks ago, a spokesman for Hamas told the *New York Times*:

I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us.

Let me repeat it. This is the Hamas spokesman:

I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders and that the Arab world will stand with us.

So that is the first point.

The second point is that, if we go back a little bit in history, we understand that Israel has done nothing in recent years to give hope for a peaceful settlement—maintaining the blockade of Gaza, deepening the daily humiliations of occupation in the West Bank, and largely ignoring the horrendous living conditions facing Palestinians. Massive poverty existed in Gaza before October 7. Something like 70 percent of the young people in Gaza were unemployed.

How is that for a reality in terms of despair and hopelessness? Those are the conditions that existed before the Israeli attack.

Needless to say, I do not have all of the answers to this never-ending tragedy. But for those of us who believe in

peace and for those of us who believe in justice, it is imperative that we do our best to provide Israelis and Palestinians with a thoughtful response that maps out a realistic path to addressing the reality we face today.

Let me just give you a few of my thoughts as to the best way forward and how the United States can rally the world around a moral position that moves us toward peace in the region and justice for an oppressed Palestinian population.

To start with, in my view, we must demand an immediate end to Israel's indiscriminate bombing, which is causing and has caused an enormous number of civilian casualties and is in violation of international law.

The main point here is: Israel is at war with Hamas, not with the Palestinian people. Israel cannot bomb an entire neighborhood just to take out one Hamas lieutenant. That is simply not acceptable and not something the United States should be complicit with.

Further, we must extend the humanitarian pause that exists right now so that the United Nations has the time to safely set up the distribution network needed to prevent thirst, starvation, and disease, to build shelters, and to evacuate those who need critical care.

Once again, we are looking at an unimaginable humanitarian crisis, and the U.N. is going to need as much time as it can get to try to help people in desperate need. This window will also allow for talks to free as many hostages as possible. And I think we all would like to see every hostage returned to their loved ones. This extended pause must not precede a resumption of a discriminate bombing. Israel will continue to go after Hamas, but it must dramatically change its tactics to minimize civilian harm.

If long-suffering Palestinians are ever going to have a chance at self-determination and a decent standard of living, there must be no long-term Israeli reoccupation and blockade of Gaza. If Hamas is going to be removed from power—as they must be—and Palestinians given the opportunity for a better life, an Israeli occupation of Gaza would be absolutely counterproductive and would benefit Hamas. Imagine Israeli soldiers all over an occupied Gaza. For the sake of regional peace and a brighter future for the Palestinian people, Gaza must have a chance to be free of Hamas. There can be no long-term Israeli occupation.

To achieve the political transformation that Gaza needs—and Gaza desperately needs a political transformation—new Palestinian leadership will be required as part of a wider political process. And for that transformation and peace process to take place, Israel must make political commitments that will allow for Palestinian leadership committed to peace to build support. What I think people all over the world want to see and what

the people of Gaza want to see is leadership that will take care of their needs, provide for them, allow them self-determination, not leadership in perpetual warfare with Israel.

Israel must also guarantee displaced Palestinians the absolute right to return to their homes as Gaza rebuilds. And I am very concerned by some of the remarks we hear from Israel, from some Israeli leadership, questioning that basic right of people to return to their communities.

People who have lived in poverty and despair for years, as people in Gaza have, cannot be made permanently homeless. Israel must also commit to end the killings of Palestinians in the West Bank and freeze settlements there as a first step to permanently ending the occupation.

Those steps will show that peace can deliver for the Palestinian people, hopefully giving the Palestinian Authority the legitimacy it needs to assume administrative control of Gaza, likely after an interim stabilization period under an international force.

Finally, if Palestinians are to have any hope for a decent future, there must be a commitment to broad peace talks to advance a new two-state solution in the wake of this war.

The United States, the international community, and Israel's neighbors must move aggressively toward that two-state goal. This would include dramatically increased international support for the Palestinian people, including from wealthy Gulf States. It would also mean the promise of full recognition of Palestine pending the formation of a new democratically elected government committed to peace with Israel.

Let us be clear—and I think this is the main point that I want to make this evening—that we should be clear that all of this is not going to happen on its own. Left alone, sad to say, Israel is not going to bring this about.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud Party was explicitly formed on the premise that "between the Sea and the Jordan [River] there will only be Israeli sovereignty." And the current coalition agreement reinforces that goal. This is not just ideology. This idea that Israel has the right to control everything between the sea and the Jordan River, that is just not ideology. The Israeli Government has systematically pursued this goal.

The last year saw record Israeli settlement growth in the West Bank where more than 700,000 Israelis now live in areas that the United Nations and the United States agree are occupied territories. They have used state violence to back up this de facto annexation.

Sadly, tragically, since October 7, the United Nations reports that at least 208 Palestinians, including 53 children, have been killed by Israeli security forces and settlers. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Mr. Netanyahu has made clear where he stands on these critical issues. Now

is the time for us to make clear where we stand on these issues. And the truth is that if asking nicely worked, we wouldn't be in the position we are today. Asking nicely just is not going to bring about the kinds of changes that are needed.

The only way these vital and necessary changes will occur is if the United States uses the substantial leverage we have with Israel, and we all know what that leverage is. For many years, the United States has provided Israel with substantial sums of money, with close to no strings attached. Currently, we provide \$3.8 billion a year to Israel, no strings attached.

President Biden has asked for \$14.3 billion more on top of that sum and asked Congress to waive normal, already limited oversight rules. This blank check approach must end. The United States must make clear that while we are friends of Israel, there are conditions to that friendship and that we cannot be complicit in actions that violate international law and our own sense of decency. That includes an end to indiscriminate bombing, a significant pause to the bombing so that massive humanitarian assistance can come into the region, the right of displaced Gazans to return to their homes, no long-term Israeli occupation of Gaza, an end to settler violence in the West Bank and a freeze on settlement expansion, and maybe, most importantly, a commitment to broad peace talks for a two-state solution in the wake of this war.

Over the years, people of good will around the world, including Israelis and Palestinians, have tried to address this conflict in a way that brings justice to the Palestinians and security for Israel. Israel is entitled to security, to be free of terrorist attacks.

Now, I and some other Members of Congress have tried over the years to do what we could. Obviously, painfully, we did not do enough. Now, we must recommit to this effort. The stakes are just too high to give up. It is clear that Netanyahu and his extreme rightwing government are not going to do this on their own, which is why the United States must use its leverage to force these necessary changes and push hard for a wider political process that leads to a two-state solution.

These should be the conditions of our solidarity, including in the supplemental spending bill, which we will soon be considering.

Israel is a longtime friend and ally of the United States, and I respect that, but when there is this level of destruction and bloodshed and when tens of billions of dollars have been requested, it is more than reasonable for the United States to have a say in where our taxpayer dollars go and how they are spent. This is money that comes from the taxpayers of the United States.

Israel has an absolute right to defend itself, but it does not have the right to use American taxpayer funds in viola-

tion of international law or with little regard for civilian casualties. Now, I know that when we use the word "conditioning," people become very alarmed. Oh my God, terrible idea. Virtually every dollar that we appropriate has conditions attached to it. If you are on food stamps tonight, you have got conditions. If you are on unemployment, you have got conditions. If you are on section 8 housing, you have conditions. We have conditions on everything. We don't give away money. We say you have to be eligible for it; this is what you have got to do; these are the requirements. That is conditioning.

Conditioning, in fact, has been, for a long time, seen as a key to U.S. policy regarding foreign governments, including Israel, not a new idea. The United States has routinely conditioned aid on countries, including Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, to name a few. Presidents Carter, Reagan, H. W. Bush, and Clinton, all conditioned aid to Israel to secure changes in their policies.

President Reagan actually suspended certain arms deliveries and threatened to stop all military aid due to Israel's war in Lebanon. That is a condition, a pretty strong condition. Sending \$14.3 billion to Netanyahu's government on top of the \$3.8 billion we provide every year and the billions of arms the United States has already provided with no strings attached would be a huge mistake, out of step with longstanding U.S. policy, and not something I believe that the American people want to see.

I have laid out what I believe some of these conditions should be, and that is an end to the indiscriminate bombing that we have seen, a guarantee that displaced Palestinians will have the right to return to their homes, no long-term occupation or blockade of Gaza, a freeze on the West Bank settlements there, and a commitment to broad peace talks for a two-state solution.

Those are some of the conditions that I think we have more than a right to demand when we provide money to Israel.

Finally, let me end this on a personal note. There is no question that people all over this country have strong disagreements on the war and some of the issues that I have been discussing tonight, and that is what is part of the democratic process. And in a democracy like ours, it is natural that these issues be debated, and people have different points of view.

But what we cannot do, under any circumstances, is turn to violence because of our differences—not to violence and not to bigotry. And I have to say that, tragically, in my home State of Vermont, in the city that I live, a city of 40,000 people, Burlington, VT, we have experienced this form of violent hate.

And just as I am sure you know, 3 days ago, three young men, lovely young men going to college, celebrating Thanksgiving in Burlington,

VT, were shot, and one of them is in very serious condition. So as we all hope and pray for the recovery of Hisham and Kinnan and Tahseen, the three young men who were shot, and we await the findings of the investigation into this terrible act, let me say this again loudly and clearly: Hate has no place in my State of Vermont or anyplace else in America. With Islamophobia, anti-Arab hate, anti-Semitism, and racism on the rise in this country, we must—must—come together and remain resolute in our commitment to fighting all forms of bigotry and intolerance.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:58 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, November 30, 2023, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate November 29, 2023:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ANN MARIE YASTISHOCK, OF PENNSYLVANIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE INDEPENDENT

STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU.

HEATHER ROACH VARIAVA, OF IOWA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

VERNELLE TRIM FITZPATRICK, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE GABONESE REPUBLIC.

KARA C. MCDONALD, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA.

THE JUDICIARY

JAMEL SEMPER, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY.

MICAH W.J. SMITH, OF HAWAII, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO
MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have six requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet in closed session

during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a classified briefing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.